LIVES

OF

SCOTTISH WORTHIES.

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OF

SCOTTISH WORTHIES.

BY

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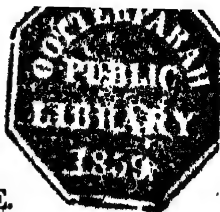
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ROBERT BRUCE.

SECTION II.

After the reduction of the country of Lorn, the tide of success continued to flow on, in favour of the Scots. Indeed, it could hardly be otherwise, considering the difference in the character of the sovereigns who were placed at the head of affairs in the two countries. Bruce, able and indefatigable, with military talents of a high order, improved by much service and experience, acting under the control of a sound judgment; enjoying the assistance and counsel of many leaders, who had been trained to war under his own eye, and possessing the confidence and admiration of the whole body of his people: Edward, weak, rash and obstinate, at variance with his nobility, under the dominion of an artful and unprincipled favourite, impatient of the reverses and hardships attendant upon war; expensive, and consequently oppressive, to the nation; and, in return, regarded by them with sentiments of distrust, and even hatred. From such a potentate nothing great could be expected; and his policy was mischievously vacillating and injudicious. The governors of Scotland were changed with a rapidity which

left them no time to pursue any certain line of policy. Within the short space of a year, not less than six of these dignitaries were appointed; and Bruce, profiting by this capricious administration, not only carried on hostilities with the utmost spirit at home, but menaced England with invasion; whilst the English monarch issued orders that the whole force of the northern division of the kingdom should be called out in readiness to oppose him.

The Scots, however, having still some employment for their arms at home, do not appear to have crossed the marches; and Edward, seized with a desire of peace, accepted the mediation of Philip, King of France, who despatched Oliver de Roches into Scotland to consult with Bruce upon the best mode of effecting are conciliation. De Roches was soon after followed by the Count of Evreux and the Bishop of Soissons; and these foreign pacificators having met a deputation of English and Scottish commissioners, a truce was concluded, which does not appear to have been very conscientiously kept by either party. In Scotland, every thing continued to present a striking contrast to the inconsistent conduct of Edward; and a transaction which took place towards the end of the year 1309, evinces the confidence and affection with which Bruce was regarded by the great and influential body of the church.

On the 24th of February, 1309, a general ecclesiastical council was convoked in the church of the Friars Minors at Dundee, in which they drew up a public instrument, expressing their

unanimous opinion that Robert Bruce, Lord of Annandale, commonly called the Competitor, had always been regarded by the people of Scotland as lawful heir to the crown, after the death of the Maiden of Norway. They proceeded to enumerate the many misfortunes with which the country had been visited during the reign of Baliol; the dreadful condition into which it had been thrown in consequence of his captivity and misconduct; and the trouble and anarchy which, for want of a faithful leader, had torn it asunder. For these reasons, they declared they had chosen for their king Robert Bruce; who, by their unanimous judgment, possessed, through his father and grandfather, an undoubted right to the throne; and with whom his faithful subjects were resolved to live and die. They remarked, that all public instruments which supported a title contrary to that of Bruce, had been extorted by force and fear, and concluded by subscribing their oaths of homage, and appending their seals to this solemn instrument.[1] It is probable that these resolutions of the clergy were connected with the deliberations of a parliament assembled at the same time, in which the two remaining estates of the barons and the commissaries of the burghs declared their attachment to Bruce by a similar declaration: but no authentic record of such an assembly has been preserved to us.

In the mean time, as the courage of the Scots, and their confidence in their leader, grew daily more confirmed, the divided councils of England

[1] Robertson's Index to the Charters, Appendix, p. iv.

inspired a proportionate timidity even in those barons, who, under any other government than that of Edward II., would have proved most formidable opponents. On the approach of the army of Bruce towards the Marches, the Earl of Hertford and Lord Clifford repaired to Carlisle, at the head of a force hastily levied in the northern counties; whilst Henry de Beaumont flew to Berwick, for the protection of the eastern border. On both quarters, however, the English suffered severe defeats; and the Scots were about to invade the country, and waste the richest parts of the northern provinces with fire and sword, when the payment of a large sum of money procured a temporary cessation of hostilities, and relieved the inhabitants from their apprehensions.[1] The truce, indeed, appears to have been confined to the borders; for in other parts of the kingdom the war continued to rage with undiminished perseverance upon the part of the Scots, and with occasional bursts of misdirected energy on the side of Edward. This monarch, whilst the Scottish king was meditating the siege of Perth, rousing himself on a sudden from his listless inactivity, issued orders for a muster of his whole military vassals at Berwick, with which force he determined instantly to proceed against the enemy. Many of his barons, indeed, disgusted at the unjust and misplaced partiality of the King for his favourite Gaveston, refused to range themselves under the royal standard, and remained in London, engaged in their intrigues against the government. But the King was joined by the Earls of Gloucester and War-

[1] Hemingford, vol. i. p. 246.

renne, Lord Henry Percy, Lord James Clifford, and a great body of his nobility; and as the discontented barons, although they refused to attend in person, were compelled by the rules of the feudal law to send the full force of their armed vassals, the army mustered in great strength, and proceeded into Scotland in the end of autumn.

The campaign, however, owing to the measures adopted by Bruce, was brief and inglorious. The flocks and herds, the agricultural produce, and all things valuable, in the houses or farm granges, were removed into the mountain fastnesses; and as Scotland had been this year visited by a grievous famine, the sacrifices to which the common people must have submitted furnish a striking proof of their self-denial, and devotedness to the cause of resistance. But their efforts were rewarded with complete success. The great host of England, proceeding from Roxburgh, advanced through the forests of Selkirk and Jedburgh, and without meeting an enemy, or making themselves master of a single castle or fortress, "consumed, burnt, wasted, and worked their will," to use the words of Hemingford, no one offering any obstacle or impediment, till they reached the Scottish sea (such was the name generally given to the Frith of Forth); where symptoms of winter appearing, its royal leader returned to Berwick upon Tweed, to which city he had commanded his court to repair, and where he passed the winter months with his queen and nobles. Here, instead of adopting the measures best calculated to retrieve his affairs, and conciliate his barons, he gave way to querulous complaints. He addressed an epistle

to the Pope, in which the absence of the Bishop of Durham from a general council was excused, on account of the military occupation of the prelate in the defence of his dominions against the Scots; and, in alluding to his late campaign, he remarked, with much bitterness, that, when lately in that country, whither he had repaired for the purpose of putting down the rebellion, Robert Bruce and his accomplices did not dare to meet him face to face in the field, but fled like foxes to their hiding-places[1]; after which they had not scrupled to issue out, and renew the war, when his retreat from their country permitted them to do so with impunity. He reprimanded his subjects for their disloyal conduct, in furnishing his enemies with arms, horses, and provisions; and there seems good reason to believe that the English merchant-adventurers, who freighted their vessels to supply the army of Edward, did not scruple, on frequent occasions, to prefer the purchaser who offered the highest or the readiest price, to whatever nation he belonged.

In the midst of this weakness, Bruce reappeared in strength; and Edward, after the depth of winter had passed, again proceeded against him: but it was to experience a similar disappointment; to conduct an army, discontented and mutinous for the want of provisions, through a country where the enemy was invisible; and to retreat, baffled once more by famine, to his head-quarters at Berwick. Again his unwearied antagonist emerged from his fastnesses; and again an English army, commanded, not by the king in

[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 283.

person, but by Gaveston, lately created Earl of Cornwall, advanced into Scotland; "for the purpose," says Hemingford, "of acquiring for himself some little name and military renown. And, indeed," continues this historian, "he crossed the Scottish sea, and comported himself courageously for many days, but without bringing matters to any good result; for the reason that the Scots retired before him, and, as usual, betook themselves to their forests and marshes. Upon his retreat, King Robert retaliated, by conducting his army across the Solway into Tynedale, where they held their head-quarters for some time; and after having ravaged this rich district, and driven away the flocks and herds, they returned without opposition into their own land."[1] This expedition took place in August; and it may give us some idea of the indefatigable activity of the Scots, that a month had scarcely elapsed when a second army, commanded by the King in person, again broke into Redesdale, pushed forward as far as Corbrigg, and threatened on its return the total reduction of Northumberland, unless the lords wardens of the English marches had once more purchased an impunity from attack by the immediate payment of two thousand marks; a weak and injudicious mode of settlement, which was likely to produce a speedy repetition of the visit.[1]

In the mean time Bruce led back his army, and commenced the siege of Perth. The acquisition of this town, from its situation in the heart of

[1] Chron. Lanercost, apud Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 248.
[2] Id. ibid.

the country, had been long regarded as of first-rate importance. Since the commencement of the wars of Edward I., it had been one of the principal garrisons of the English in Scotland; and the strength of the fortifications, repeatedly increased and repaired by this monarch, evinced the value which he attached to it. The principal wall, which completely surrounded the town, was of great height and thickness, composed of that strong compact masonry which to this day distinguishes the castles of Edward I. Beyond the wall was a broad and deep moat, filled with water; and outside of all a rampart or dike, probably of turf. For six weeks these defences bade defiance to the utmost efforts of the Scottish king; but at last, after a careful inspection, he discovered a part of the moat which could be forded, although with difficulty. When he ascertained this, Bruce provided his troops with scaling-ladders; and having thrown the enemy off their guard, by striking his tents, and retiring from the siege, as if he abandoned all idea of success, he suddenly and silently returned, during a dark October night, and taking his ladder in his hand, led his men in person across the moat, although the water stood as high as his throat. It is reported by Barbour that the cheerful hardihood of the King was highly commended by a French knight who now served with Bruce. "There was then in the company," says this graphic and faithful biographer, "a wight and hardy knight of France, who, seeing the King first try the depth with his spear, and then pass with his ladder in his hand into the water, crossed himself in wonder,

and exclaimed, 'Good Lord, what shall we now say of our carpet companions in France, whose time is devoted to the stuffing their paunches with rich viands, to the dance, and the wine-cup; when so worthy and valiant a knight thus exposes himself to such imminent peril, to win a poor collection of huts!'"[1] The attack thus bo[illegible]n was completely successful. The to[illegible]ormed, and in the hands of the Scots, almost before the English garrison had left their beds; and Bruce, with that anxiety to spare the unnecessary effusion of blood which forms so amiable a feature in his character, issued orders that none should be put to death except such as obstinately refused to accept of quarter. [illegible] fortifications were destroyed; the arms and military stores carried off; the prisoners marched to secure quarters; and the king, gaining confidence from such repeated success, determined once more to carry the war into England, at the head of a more formidable army than any which he had hitherto commanded.

In the harvest time of the year 1312, the unhappy and devoted inhabitants of the English border counties discerned the well known forerunners of an invasion, in the smoke of hamlets and villages, which rose from the horizon, and the crowds of women and children, who, with the aged and infirm, fled from the face of the enemy. As the flood of war rolled onwards, houses, villages, castles, granges, with the grain which had been so lately gathered in, were indiscriminately given to the flames: the towns of

[1] Barbour, by Jamieson, p. 137.

Hexham and Corbrigg were consumed and rased; and the rich city of Durham stormed in a night assault, partly burnt to the ground, and so completely sacked and plundered, that the clergy and opulent inhabitants of the bishopric, dreading the continuance of the visitation, and unable to muster a force equal to their defence, had again recourse to a pecuniary negotiation, and purchased a truce by the advance of two thousand pounds. It was stipulated, however, by the Scottish monarch, when he consented to this cessation of hostilities, that his army should pass unmolested through the territories of the bishopric whenever he deemed it expedient to invade England; and with such alarm did this proviso affect the border counties of Northumberland, Cumberland, and Westmoreland, that each contributed the sum of two thousand pounds to be included in the same truce.[1]

Having concluded this arrangement, Bruce broke up his encampment at Chester, and called in his advanced division, which had been stationed, under the command of Sir James Douglas, at Hartlepool. He then separated his force into two parts, with the object of making a simultaneous assault upon the frontier fortresses of Carlisle and Berwick. The attack upon the first was committed to Douglas, who, after a severe loss, was completely repulsed by the English; nor was the enterprise against Berwick, which appears to have been commanded by the King in person, more successful. The intention was to repeat the stratagem which had been employed at Perth,

[1] Chron. Lanercost, apud Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 257.

and carry the town by a night escalade: but the sudden barking of a dog alarmed the garrison at the moment the Scottish soldiers had fixed the iron hooks of their rope ladders, and were beginning to mount the wall: in consequence of which they were compelled to abandon the attempt, and retreat into Scotland. The partial reverse, however, was repaid by the successes which attended the arms of Bruce upon his return; and an event which occurred about this time evinced how completely the ardent spirit of the king had infused itself into the lowest classes of his subjects. This was the capture of the strong castle of Linlithgow, by a common countryman, named Binnock.

Edward I. had spent much time and money in fortifying this place, which he wisely deemed of great importance; and since this period it had continued to be one of the principal garrisons of the English, who at this moment held it in great force. Binnock, or Bunnock, an athletic and determined man,—or, to use the expressive phrase of Barbour, a "stout carle and a stoure," —had been in the practice of supplying the garrison with forage; and seizing an occasion, when he had been commissioned to bring in several cart-loads, he concealed eight soldiers, well armed, and covered up with bunches of hay, in the body of his wain: an ambush was formed at the same time in the copsewood near the castle gate; and whilst a stout yeoman drove the waggon, Bunnock himself followed behind, well armed, but concealing his weapons under his countryman's frock. In this manner,

on presenting themselves before the gate, the portcullis was instantly lowered, and the porter, unsuspicious of the stratagem, allowed the waggon to cross the drawbridge, and pass under the stone archway, taking up a position which rendered it impossible to close the gates. At this moment, upon a signal agreed on, the driver cut the ropes which yoked the oxen to the waggon, and drove them forward; the armed soldiers leaped from their concealment; and Bunnock, stabbing the porter, with loud shouts attacked the garrison. The additional party, which had lain concealed till they heard the din of the attack, now rushed in; and in a short time the whole of the English were put to the sword, and the castle in possession of the Scots. It immediately experienced the fate of all the fortresses which fell into the hands of Bruce, in being dismantled, and rendered untenable by troops.

If such were the exploits of the common countrymen, who, by their familiarity with war, and the example of the King, were transformed into bold leaders, we are led to expect higher things from such captains as Douglas and Randolph. The good Sir James had already rendered essential services to the country, in the great struggle in which it was engaged; and Bruce now owed to his valour one of the most important acquisitions which had been made during the war, — the possession of the strong border fortress of Roxburgh. The manner in which it was taken is thus admirably described by the contemporary chronicler, who had, probably, received his account from some of the soldiers present at

the enterprise. "It was at this same time that James of Douglas set all his wit to find out how Roxburgh might be won through subtlety and stratagem; for which purpose he caused Sym of the Leadhouse, a crafty and ingenious artisan, to make ladders of hempen ropes, with iron steps, so well bound together that there was no fear of their giving way; whilst at the top of them a crook or tongue of iron was so contrived, that if it was once fixed on the corbel or copestone of the wall, and the ladder let fall straight down, it would stand firm, and answer its purpose with perfect security. Having provided himself in this manner, the good lord of Douglas privately drew together threescore stout soldiers, and on Fastern's Even, in the early part of the night, took his way with them to the ca.tle. Their armour was concealed by black frock coats thrown over it; and as soon as they approached pretty near the walls, they sent away their horses, and began to creep onwards upon their hands and feet, as if they were a herd of kine or oxen, which the farmer had neglected to drive home. The night was exceedingly dark, so that it was impossible for the English watches to discover the cheat; and yet they espied the dark figures moving on, and the Scottish soldiers, who by this time were near the foot of the wall, could overhear their remarks. ''Tis a careless losel,' said they, naming a neighbouring farmer, 'who leaves his oxen out in this way, to be picked up by Douglas and his men. Doubtless he is making good cheer at this moment; but his stalls are

likely to be the worse filled in the morning:' and, indeed," observes Barbour, "had any one seen the men creeping on, one by one, on all fours, they could scarcely have failed to mistake them for black cattle; but Douglas and his men, holding their breath, listened gladly to their speeches, and having got close to the wall, began to prepare their scaling tackle. The iron hook was now cast over the kyrnell or copestone, and, making a loud check as it fixed, alarmed one of the English watchmen, who ran to the spot. This, however, was not so quickly done as it might have been; and Sym of the Leadhouse, who had by this time got up the ladder, catching hold of the fellow before he had time to give the alarm, slew him by a stab in the throat, and casting, him down to his friends below, bade them come up, for all was succeeding as they wished. This they did in great haste, but not before Sym of the Leadhouse was attacked by another naked man, who had started out of bed, and, seeing a stranger standing on the parapet, rushed boldly upon the intruder. He experienced, however, the same fate as the first, 'for Sym slew him deliverly;' and Douglas, with his soldiers, having now surmounted the parapet, leaped down into the inner court, and pressed onwards to the principal tower. In the hall the whole garrison were assembled, dancing, singing, and making much joy and merriment, as is the custom upon Fastern's Even, believing themselves in perfect security; when a horrid shout of 'Douglas! Douglas!' at once broke up the revels, and

threw them into such a state of terror and amazement, that they could take no measures for defence, but were cruelly and without pity put to the sword.

In the midst of this bloodshed and confusion, the governor, a Burgundian knight, named Gellemin de Fiennes, retreated with a company to the keep, and, having barricaded the entrance, defended himself with much courage; hoping that, although Douglas was in possession of the castle, he should be able to make good the tower against his utmost assault. In this he succeeded for a short space; but, at last, a desperate wound which he received in the face, compelled him to capitulate; and Douglas, who respected his bravery, not only granted him honourable terms, but a convoy to England, where he soon after died of his wound. Sir James then took possession of the castle, and sent Simon of the Leadhouse with the news of its capture to the king. It may be easily believed that Bruce was not slow to reward this brave yeoman; and he afterwards despatched his brother, Sir Edward Bruce, with a commission to destroy the fortifications, tower, castle, and dungeon; who, bringing a large force with him, made such good speed, that in a very short time the whole works were levelled with the ground, and all the country of Teviotdale, except Jedburgh, and a few strengths near the English border, submitted to the Scottish king."[1]

[1] Barbour, p. 200. 204.

At the same time that Douglas performed this important service, his friend and rival in arms, Randolph Earl of Murray, was employed in the siege of the castle of Edinburgh,—a place, from its situation, still more impregnable than Roxburgh. This great man, whose services to the country in the war of liberty were only inferior to those of his royal master, was the son of Thomas Randolph of Strathdown, great chamberlain of Scotland, and Lady Isabel Bruce, the king's sister; and although the desperate circumstances in which the nation was placed in the commencement of the career of Bruce, and his distrust of the early character of the King, had the effect of detaching him for a brief interval from the patriotic party, yet his return to his allegiance was unequivocally cordial and sincere. He had now served his uncle, with fidelity and enthusiasm, for four years; and during this period had not only evinced a remarkable capacity in war, but a strength of judgment in all affairs of state, which commanded the confidence, and often called forth the admiration, of Bruce. His portrait is thus minutely given, by one who painted from the life:—"He was of a comely stature, broad-visaged, and of a fair and pleasant countenance, courteous, debonair, and of great self-possession, loving honour and loyalty, and hating falsehood above all things, generous and open-handed, delighting in princely entertainments, and of an amorous and sociable disposition. He was ever fond of having the bravest knights about him, whom he dearly loved;

and, to say the whole truth in few words, he was fulfilled of all bounty, and altogether made up of virtues."[1]

The situation of Edinburgh castle, in those days, when the art of bombarding by cannon was undiscovered, rendered it nearly impregnable: on one side it was defended not only by a precipitous rock, but by a lake which flowed at the bottom of the cliff, and filled up the ground now occupied by the public gardens: on the southern and western sides, although the cliff was not so perpendicular, and might have been climbed during the day, yet, crested as it was by strong walls and flanking towers, and exposed as every assault must have been to the immediate detection of the garrison, it would have been madness to have attempted to carry it by a *coup de main*. Randolph's first idea, therefore, was to reduce it by famine; but the English garrison had been abundantly supplied, and showed no symptoms of capitulating. At length a soldier, named Francis, who then served in the Scottish army, but who appears to have been an English renegade, privately sought an interview with the Earl of Moray, and informed him that he was ready to show him a way up the rock to the foot of the wall; where a resolute man might easily scale it with a rope-ladder. He affirmed that he had often done so himself; that he had lived in the castle during his youth; and had first discovered this passage down the cliff from his anxiety to carry on a love intrigue with a girl in the city below. Frequent

[1] Barbour, p. 197, 198. Fordun, by Hearne, vol. iv. p. 107.

custom, he said, had rendered him so familiar with the path, that, although steep and intricate, he would undertake to lead them in the darkest night, and he was himself ready first to mount the ladder. To this scheme, Randolph, after strictly enquiring into the character of the man, agreed; and having chosen a dark night, he selected thirty resolute soldiers, and followed the guidance of Francis, who led him straight to the bottom of the crag, which, to use the words of Barbour, "was high and hideous, and right perilous to climb." Their guide, however, readily led the way, and painfully and slowly proceeded, grasping the jutting points of the rock, swinging himself up by the branches of the stunted trees and shrubs which clothed its sides, and followed close by Randolph and his men; who, proceeding by a path which was quite unknown to them, and without a ray even of starlight to direct them, might by a single false step have been precipitated to the bottom, and dashed to pieces.

When in this manner they had surmounted half the cliff, they gained a small platform of rock, where they sat down for a few moments to recover breath: and here the enterprise was on the point of miscarrying; for, at the instant they reached it, the English "check-watches" happened to exchange their challenges, on the wall immediately above their heads; and, whether in sport or in earnest, one of them cast a stone in the direction of the spot where the Scots were concealed, crying out, "Away with you, I see you well!" It is not unlikely that the soldier had heard a noise, or discerned something moving

upon the rock; and we may conceive the state to which Randolph and his men were reduced by such an exclamation, which they perfectly overheard. In a moment, however, their fears were at an end; the guards overhead passed onwards on their rounds, and all was once more still. Not an instant was now lost; and although the most dangerous and perpendicular part of the rock was yet to be surmounted, Randolph and his men, under their bold guide, soon reached the bottom of the wall, which, at this spot, was not above twelve feet in height. The ladder was now raised, the iron hooks fixed on the parapet, and Francis instantly mounted. After him came Sir Andrew Gray, then Randolph himself; and the rest of the soldiers ascended the ladder after their lord, with the utmost speed and good-will.

It was impossible, however, for this to be done in silence; and ere all had mounted, the English watches, hearing the ringing of armour and the hum of voices, rushed forward to the spot, shouting out "Treason!" and encountering Randolph with ready courage. It rarely happens, however, that an enterprise of this dangerous nature, if not unsuccessful at the commencement, proves abortive when carried farther on. Randolph and his soldiers, animated by the dangers they had already overcome, fought with desperate courage; and the garrison, panic-struck by the surprise, and surrounded by darkness, believed their assailants to be far stronger than they really were. Many, under the influence of such terrors, fled over the walls; others dispersed in small parties, in remote parts of the fortifications; and the con-

stable being slain, after a brave defence, the castle was, before morning, entirely in possession of the Scots. It is, perhaps, allowable in the venerable biographer of Bruce to desert history, and ransack the romance of imaginary paladins, in quest of some "point of arms" worthy of comparison with this feat of Randolph.[1]

In the same year the King recovered from the enemy the castle of Butel, in Galloway, besides Dumfries, Dalswynton, and other inferior fortalices; so that, to the north of the Forth, almost the whole country appears to have been in possession of the Scots. So strong was Bruce at this time, and so popular had his successes rendered him, that he found little difficulty in maintaining two armies. To one of these was committed an invasion of Cumberland; whilst, in person, he led the other against the Isle of Man, which, having expelled the powerful sept of the Macdowalls, his inveterate enemies, and the constant allies of England, he reduced wholly under his dominion. From Man he despatched his galleys to levy contributions upon the coast of Ireland; and on his return to Scotland, in the autumn of 1313, found that his brother, Sir Edward Bruce, had mastered the castles of Rutherglen and Dundee; and, proceeding with that impetuosity and recklessness which, although generally redeemed by success, often gave the King his brother great annoyance, had laid siege to Stirling.

This enterprise does not appear, at this moment, to have coincided with the plan of military operations which the Scottish monarch had laid

[1] Barbour, p. 205. 210.

down; yet, when once commenced, he was anxious that the siege should be pushed to the utmost; and there seemed to be little doubt that Stirling would follow the fate of Edinburgh and Roxburgh, as it began to suffer from famine; and its governor, Sir Philip Mowbray, after a gallant defence, found himself compelled to negotiate. The political talents of Sir Edward Bruce, however, were inferior to his abilities for war; and he suffered himself to be inveigled into a treaty, by which Mowbray consented to deliver up the fortress if he was not rescued by an English army before the 24th of June in the ensuing year, being the feast of St. John the Baptist. Nothing could be more impolitic than such an agreement; and, when informed of it, the King was deeply indignant at the precipitancy of his brother. "This is unwisely done," said he, "to give so long a period of preparation to so mighty a king. Has he not all England, Ireland, Wales, and Aquitaine, besides a part of Scotland which yet owns him as its sovereign; while his exchequer is so rich, that he may hire as many mercenaries as he pleases. Yet our honour is pledged, and must not be sullied. We shall therefore assemble our forces, and abide the event."[1]

Bruce was not mistaken when he anticipated the vast preparations which were likely to be made by the King of England; and Edward, although his conduct with regard to Scotland during the last few years had been marked by caprice and weakness, seems to have become at last convinced that, if the war was permitted to

[1] Barbour, p. 216, 217.

languish, and fortress after fortress to be gradually wrested from his hands, the time must soon arrive when the conquests which had cost his father so much blood and treasure, would be lost beyond all hope of recovery. He determined, therefore, to make one gigantic effort for the recovery of Scotland; and for this purpose, having obtained a partial reconciliation with the greater part of his barons, whom his tyrannical behaviour had lately estranged, he summoned the whole military array of his kingdom to meet him, on the 11th of June, at Berwick.

The royal summonses were directed to ninety-three barons, who were commanded on their fealty and homage to attend the King with horse and arms, and their whole military service, to proceed against his enemies of Scotland; a proclamation was issued at the same time, addressed to the sheriffs of every county in England, enjoining them to summon all archbishops, abbots, priors, and other ecclesiastical dignitaries, and all women and female vassals who owed military service, to send their proportion of knights or soldiers to join the royal army at the same place and time: letters were also directed to Eth O'Donald, Dermod O'Kahan, Doneval O'Neil, and twenty others of the most powerful Irish chiefs, requesting their prompt attendance with as great a force as they could collect, with directions to place themselves under the command of Richard de Burgh, Earl of Ulster; and the same demand was made upon all English barons who possessed estates in Ireland. Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, a nobleman who had been already

much employed in the wars of Scotland, was constituted governor of that kingdom, and sent off immediately to make preparations for the arrival of the King. Not contented with his muster of a land army, Edward gave orders for the fitting out a fleet; and to co-operate with this naval armament he engaged John of Argyle, one of those Hebridean princes who were ever ready to throw their power into the scale against Scotland, and who possessed a formidable fleet of his own. He dignified him at the same time with the title of High Admiral of the Western Fleet of England; and it is not unworthy of remark, that at this remote period we find the right of impressing mariners for the completing the equipment of their vessels expressly given to the captains of ships, in whatever port they may happen to be; whilst the sheriff of the county and the civil magistrates were commanded to enforce their orders.

In addition to these preparations, the King, having received information that it was the intention of the Scots to draw up their army in a marshy district, where it would be difficult for cavalry to act with safety, directed a body of 21,500 infantry to be raised in England and Wales,[1] which, in conjunction with the Irish troops, consisting of foot soldiers lightly armed, and of the light irregular cavalry called hobilers, would, it was hoped, be able to attack the Scots, even in the strongest country where they could have pitched their encampment. The original writs, the mul-

[1] Rymer, Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 483.

tifarious and complicated orders for the calling together the various divisions of this army, for the organisation of the victualling and forage departments, for the providing of waggons and cars to transport the tents and pavilions, and for assembling the various artisans, smiths, armourers, miners, and carpenters, who were required to supply the wants and repair the damages incident upon the march of so large a host, are still to be seen amongst the records of the kingdom; and they demonstrate that the force with which Edward proceeded against Scotland, amounted, at the lowest calculation, to 100,000 men.

Having received certain intelligence of the advance of the English monarch from Berwick, Bruce issued his commands that the whole Scots army should assemble in the Torwood, an extensive forest lying between Falkirk and Stirling, of which the remains are still to be seen, but which at this remote period probably covered the whole district stretching from the hill now called the Torwood, over the lower grounds of Woodside, and reaching nearly to Carnock and Airth. These orders were promptly obeyed. Edward Bruce, Randolph, Walter the Steward of Scotland, then a young man, assisted by his near kinsman Sir James Douglas, were the leaders of the principal divisions; and, on mustering his whole force, Bruce found that he had under his command upwards of 30,000 excellent troops, not including the baggage drivers, merchants, and camp followers, who amounted to 15,000. Although, therefore, he had reason to believe that the

strength of his adversary was more than three times greater than his own, yet, acquainted as he was with the country, he did not hesitate to abide him.

It was Saturday the 22d of June, when intelligence was brought to the Scottish camp in the Torwood, that the English army had reached Edinburgh, where they had taken up their quarters the night before. On receiving this news, the King immediately put his forces in motion; and having explained to the leaders his general ideas as to the arrangement of the troops, and the necessity of fighting entirely on foot, he marched from the Torwood to the neighbourhood of Stirling. The terms of the treaty which rendered it imperative on the enemy to attempt the relief of Stirling castle, was one great advantage which Bruce enjoyed in making his dispositions for the approaching conflict. It gave him a pretty accurate knowledge of their line of march and probable point of attack; and thus enabled him to choose the ground so as to render his own inferior force the most available, and to contract the superior numbers of the enemy into a space which should cripple and impede their movements. For this purpose he resolved that his army should be drawn up in a line extending from the elevated ground above St. Ninian's, which formed the point on which he rested his extreme left, along the plain at the foot of a hill in his rear, known since by the name of the Gillieshill; thus occupying an undulating tract of country, then called the New Park, and still retaining part of its original appellation in

the names of New Park, and Park Farm.[1] The right of the army rested on a stream called the Bannock, which, although neither very formidable from its depth or its rapidity, had its rugged banks, at that remote period, covered with wood, so as to form a defence against cavalry. The centre of the position was partially defended by a morass, part of which still remains, under the names of Milton Bog, and Halbert's Bog; whilst any direct attack upon the left, by a force advancing by the old Torwood Road from Falkirk to Stirling, (the line of the English march,) was rendered extremely precarious by the intervention of the deep and rugged valley in which the Bannock runs, between the modern village of Bannockburn and Milton.

Although Bruce's position was thus well defended almost along its whole line, yet in a firm field which was adapted for the movements of cavalry, and which lay on the left in the line which must be crossed by the English if they attempted to pass through the New Park to the castle, the King caused many parallel rows of pits to be dug, each about a foot in breadth, and knee-deep, in which he placed sharp stakes, and afterwards covered them up with sod, so as to be imperceptible to the enemy.[2] The command of

[1] This, and some other of the facts and illustrations in the text, were collected by the author, during a careful personal survey of the field of battle, in September, 1830.

[2] It does not appear, however, that the English attempted to charge over this deceitful ground, which was so thickly covered with the concealed pits, as to be compared by an ancient contemporary author to a honeycomb; the great brunt of the battle being much farther up to the right.

the vaward, or front division, which formed the centre of the Scottish force, was given to Randolph Earl of Moray, Bruce's nephew, an officer of whose military talents the King had the highest opinion. The leading of the right wing was intrusted to Sir Edward Bruce, and of the left to Walter, the High Steward of Scotland, along with the good Sir James Douglas, whose veteran experience was thought necessary to direct the judgment and restrain the impetuosity of his youthful kinsman. In addition to these three divisions, Bruce formed a reserve, or fourth battle, composed of his own soldiers of Carrick, along with the men of Argyle, Kintire, and the Isles. and a considerable force of strong spearmen from the low countries: of this the King took the command in person, and drew it up considerably in the rear, and immediately behind the centre.[1] Having made these dispositions on the Saturday, so that the various leaders perfectly understood their respective places in the line, the army were dismissed to their quarters, and scouts sent out to obtain information of the enemy.

On Sunday, the 23d of June, which was the vigil of St. John, the army heard mass soon after sunrise. Many, aware of the mortal nature of the struggle in which they were so soon to engage, devoutly confessed themselves, expressing

[1] "He said the rereward he wald ma,
And even before him suld ga
The vaward,—and on athir hand
The tothyr battles suld be gangand."
Barbour, b. viii. p. 225. l. 345.

at the same moment their determination either to die in that battle, or set their country free; whilst the whole army kept their fast on bread and water.[1] Immediately after mass, Bruce rode forward, to examine the pits which had been made; and he appears to have been so well satisfied with their construction, and the excellent defence which they formed against cavalry, that he not only sank them on the left but also on the right flank of his position.[2] On his return to the camp, he gave orders that the whole force should arm themselves, and that the leaders should array their divisions in the order agreed on. This being done, a proclamation was made, in the name of the King, by a herald who stood on an eminence in front of the line, that if any one present in the host had not made up his mind to win all, or to die with honour, in the approaching conflict, he had now free permission to depart unmolested; seeing that it was the wish of the King that none should remain who had not firmly resolved to stand by him to the last, and take on that field the fortune which God should send." As the tenour of this proclamation was rapidly transmitted along the line, a general shout arose, given with such hearty good-will, that Bruce did not hesitate to receive it as a favourable augury. His next care was to send the whole baggage of

[1] "Thar dynit nane of them that day,
Bot for the vigil of Sanct Johane,
Thai fastet water and bread ilkan."
Barbour, b. viii. p. 226.

[2] "On *ather* side right weill braid,
It was pittit." Ibid.

the army, under the charge of the suttlers and camp followers, to a valley situated at the back of the Gillieshill, in the rear of his position; and scarcely had these orders been obeyed when the scouts came in, and brought intelligence that the English army had lain all night at Falkirk, a small town, only about nine miles' distance. The King commanded the soldiers, therefore, to remain armed, and in their ranks; and, on again examining the whole extent of his line, he appears to have dreaded that it left the passage to Stirling castle by the flat ground around the church of St. Ninian's too much exposed to an enemy advancing from Falkirk. This led to a temporary alteration in his order of battle. Randolph, with his division, was removed from the centre, and posted on the elevated ground above St. Ninian's, with strict injunctions to guard the passage by the church to the castle; whilst Bruce brought up the rearward to occupy the space left vacant by Randolph, and defend the passage in front of the line between Milton and the Scottish position.[1]

Having completed this arrangement, he despatched Sir James Douglas and Sir Robert Keith, hereditary marshal of Scotland, with a select party of horse, to watch the approach of the enemy; and these two leaders having pushed forward over the shoulder of the Plean Hill, at the back of which lay the road between Falkirk

1 Barbour, b. viii. p. 228. This alteration in the original disposition of the army, which has not hitherto been sufficiently attended to, explains some apparent obscurities in the account of the battle.

and Stirling, soon descried the army of Edward on its march. If we recollect there is certain evidence that it consisted of 100,000 men, the description given by Barbour, a contemporary chronicler, of the ground it covered, and the impression made by its first appearance, will not appear exaggerated. "They soon," says he, "came in sight of the great host, which caused the country to appear on fire, by the brightness of the shields and the burnished helmets glancing against the sun. So great was the crowd of embroidered banners, of standards, of pennons, and of spears; such multitudes of knights were seen mounted on excellent horses, flaming in their rich-coloured surcoats; so extensive was the ground occupied by their numerous battles, and yet so deep and compact did the columns appear, that it is not too much to say, the stoutest host in Christendom would have been confounded to have seen their enemies in such numbers, and so admirably apparelled for battle."[1] The marshal and Douglas now rode back to the King, and having informed him privately of the appalling numbers and splendid equipment of the English host, received orders to spread the report among their own soldiers that the enemy, although numerous, were coming on in such confusion, that their superiority in numbers would rather injure than assist them.

By this time the English army had surmounted the shoulder of Plean Hill, and advanced within two miles of the Scottish line; upon which Edward despatched a select body of horse, under

[1] Barbour, b. viii. p. 229.

the command of four leaders, of whom the chief was Sir Robert Clifford, with orders to steal down the valley formed by the stream of the Bannock, and, concealing their march by the nature of the ground, to emerge in the carse or level lands, and, passing below the church, throw themselves into Stirling castle. The force to which this important service was intrusted mustered 800 strong, and was composed of the flower of the chivalry of England. Every individual in it was a knight or an esquire of family; armed, both man and horse, at all points, capitally mounted, and, to use a striking expression of an ancient chronicler, "yearning to achieve some great deed."[1]

So completely did the nature of the ground conceal their progress, that they had emerged from the valley, and, having gained the level ground, were rapidly proceeding towards the castle, ere even the quick eye of Bruce detected the movement. Instantly galloping up to the Earl of Moray, to whose charge this passage on the left had been committed, he pointed out the columns of Clifford, and upbraided him for his carelessness. "Ah, Randolph," cried he, "little did I dream you would have suffered these men to pass! A rose has fallen from your chaplet." Stung by this reproach, and aware that it was partly deserved, the Earl of Moray instantly pushed forward from the elevated ground above St. Ninian's into the plain, at the head of 500 spearmen; with whom he made such speed, that he came up with Clifford immediately below the

1 Barbour, 231. "Yearnyng to do chivalry."

church. On seeing his approach, the English knights wheeled round their horses, and charged the Scottish infantry at full speed. Randolph, however, who anticipated this, had time to form his men into a square, with their long spears levelled against the enemy; and in this formidable position he awaited their attack. Sir William Daynecourt, a baron highly esteemed in the English army, was in advance of the rest; and, expecting that the strength of his horse and the weight of his armour would carry him through the Scottish line, gallantly charged it alone. But he had undervalued the power of the spearmen, and was almost instantly unhorsed and slain. This disaster for a moment checked the headlong impetuosity of the rest; and Clifford's cavalry, instead of charging any one side of the square at full speed, surrounded it on all sides, and commenced a violent assault with their spears, swords, and steel maces, pushing their horses upon the lances of the Scots, and attempting to break the array by main force. The superiority of infantry under such an arrangement over a far more numerous body of horse, was now strikingly shown; for the utmost efforts of the English cavalry, although they did all that could be achieved by individual gallantry, proved unequal to the task of breaking through the closely compacted files of the Scottish column, and every new effort which they made only served to increase the slaughter. The horses were either slain by the long spears, and their riders, who fell among the combatants, despatched by the knives and daggers of the Scots; or, maddened by their wounds,

they threw their masters, and refused to advance against the dreadful hedge of steel which surrounded the little square of Randolph. There was in this encounter, says Barbour, such a mingling of horses and men, and the heat of the sun, with the sweat and toil of the battle, caused such a smoke and dust to arise, that the air hung darkened over the combatants.

At this moment Douglas, who saw the peril of Randolph, and dreaded that he would be overpowered by the enemy, rode up to Bruce, and requested permission to assist him. "As my hope is in God," said the King, "thou shalt not stir a foot. The fault was his own, and let him rectify it as he best may; I shall not break my order of battle for him." — "Ah, my liege," answered Douglas, with the earnestness which his veteran experience and tried fidelity warranted, "by your leave, I cannot stand by and see Randolph perish. With your leave, I must help him, or die in the attempt."—"Go then," said Bruce; "but return as quickly as you may; and Douglas, with this extorted permission, putting himself at the head of a considerable body of infantry, advanced rapidly into the plain. By this time, however, although the contest was yet maintained with desperate courage by Clifford, it was obvious that the result must be fatal to him; for the slaughter on his side was great, whilst Randolph's square stood firm and unbroken. On the approach, therefore, of a fresh force, the English, already discouraged, and weary of the contest, recoiled, and made an opening in their line, as if they had not resolution to stand the

charge. At this moment, Douglas, commanding his men to halt, made that celebrated speech, which has been often remarked as characteristic of a peculiarly noble and generous spirit:— "Stay, my friends, press on no farther. These brave men have already, with their unassisted strength, defeated the enemy. To come in now, would only be to make them lose part of that honour, which they have achieved so dearly. None shall say that we brought them succour. It were pity he who has gained a victory under such unlikely circumstances should lose even the smallest part of the praise which is his due." Encouraged by this fine trait of chivalry, and aware of the same symptoms which had been detected by Douglas, Randolph attacked the English horse with renewed vigour. In a short time their line was broken, the panic became general, and after a great slaughter they that escaped the pursuit of the Scots dispersed in small straggling parties over the low grounds, and rejoined the main army. Upon the flight of the English, Randolph and his soldiers, in a state of great exhaustion, unbuckled their helmets, and cast off the weightier parts of their armour, to gain breath; for they seemed, says an ancient contemporary author, like men whose whole strength had gone out of their bodies by continued fighting.[1] They soon recovered, however; and, on examining their numbers, found, to their astonishment, that, although many were wounded, only a single yeoman was slain; upon which they praised God, and joyfully proceeded, accompanied

[1] Barbour, p. 239.

by Douglas, to join the van, where the King commanded.

Here they found that during their absence events of great importance had taken place. On coming within somewhat more than a mile of the Scottish army, and observing the strong position which it occupied, Edward, as it was now towards evening, commanded a general halt, and determined to hold a council whether it would not be better to encamp in some convenient station for the night, and fight on the ensuing morning. Such, however, was the great extent of ground occupied by the English force, and the distance between one division and the other, that the orders of the King did not immediately reach the advanced division, which pushed forward, under the command of the Earls of Gloucester and Hereford; whilst the main battle, where the English King was placed in person, and the two wings, took up their ground, and remained stationary.

On seeing the approach of the English vaward, Bruce, mounted on a small palfrey, but in complete armour, and with only his battle-axe in his hand, began to form his line, riding along it a little in advance, and encouraging his men by the cheerful and confident aspect which he assumed. At this moment Sir Henry de Bohun, an English knight, who had galloped forward before his fellows, armed cap-a-pee, and mounted on a strong war-horse, completely barbed, or cased in steel, observed the King; and recognising him by the jewelled coronet which glittered on his helmet, spurred directly against him. There was time

for Bruce to have retired within the square formed by his spearmen; and such was the odds against him, that every one expected he would do so. To their surprise, however, he not only turned his palfrey's head towards his opponent, but rode forward till he reached a firm spot, where he resolutely awaited him. There was a moment of breathless suspense. Bohun, as if certain of his prize, couched his lance, and pushed at full career against his adversary. As he came on, however, and just before they met, Bruce parried the spear, inclining his palfrey in a slight degree to one side. This caused the English knight to miss his aim; and as he passed, the King, standing in his stirrups, and wielding his heavy battle-axe, with one blow cleft his skull in twain, and laid him dead at his feet. All this was the affair of a few seconds; and with such fair and well-directed strength had the blow been given, that the handle of the axe broke in two, leaving the steel blade deeply buried in the brain of the unfortunate warrior.

The action was one which could alone have been performed by a knight of great personal strength and inimitable skill in the use of his weapons; but its success was complete, and its good effect instantaneous. The Scottish vaward, who were its nearest observers, raising a general shout, advanced with levelled spears against the English, who, notwithstanding the efforts of their leaders, refused to abide the attack; and, intimidated by the fate of Bohun, wheeled round, and retreated in disorder to the main body of the army. In this repulse, the Scottish spearmen slew a few

of the English men-at-arms; but, from the speed of their horses, most escaped unhurt; and Bruce, satisfied with the result, recalled his men from the pursuit, and drew them up on their former ground. When he rejoined his leaders, who had been spectators of his personal contest with Bohun, they earnestly remonstrated against his rashness, and represented to him the ruin which might have befallen the army if he had been slain by his enemy. The King, who probably felt the justice of their reproof, did not answer it directly, but holding up the broken shaft, remarked that he was sorry for the loss of his good battle-axe.[1] It was soon after this discomfiture of the English vanguard that Randolph rejoined the King, and informed him of the defeat of Clifford; and, as the evening was now far advanced, both armies retired for the night.

When Bruce had dismissed his soldiers to their tents, he called a council of his principal officers, and congratulated them on the success which had already attended their arms. The defeat of Clifford, he remarked, and the flight of Gloucester and Hereford, furnished complete proof of their wisdom in having chosen to fight on foot; and a demonstration that, if the infantry stood firm, even a very superior force of cavalry had little chance against them.

Such events could not fail, he said, to have a strong effect upon the spirits of the English army; depressing them in the same proportion

[1] "But menyt hys handax shaft, swa
Was with the strak brokyn in twa."
Barbour, p. 237.

as they ought to raise courage and hope among the Scots. For his own part, he continued anxious to give battle to the English, having a confident trust that so fair a beginning, for which they ought to praise God, would be followed by a victorious result. Yet, nevertheless, he was ready to be guided by the opinion of the majority; and if they thought the hazard too great, to withdraw from the contest, which, from the nature of the ground, was still perfectly practicable. In reply to this speech of the king, his principal barons unanimously answered, that they were determined to abide the battle, and deliver their country, or die upon the field. Encouraged by these words, Bruce commanded them to be armed next morning before dawn, so that by sunrise the whole host should have heard mass, and be drawn up in the order already agreed on. They had justice, he said, on their side; and might confidently reckon on the favour of God, who would defend the right. If they were victorious, the plunder of the English camp would be enough to make a rich man of the meanest soldier in their ranks; but the higher motives with which they drew the sword were, when compared with those of their antagonists, of the most animating description: the Scots fighting for every thing that brave men hold precious, — for their freedom as a people; for their wives and children; the land which held the ashes of their fathers; — whilst the English were unwillingly forced into action to gratify the will of a tyrant. Such was his final address to these brave leaders.

On Monday, June 24th, the Scottish force had armed themselves, according to the orders of

the King, a little before dawn; and Bruce, who fully felt the solemnity of the approaching struggle, first confessed himself to the Abbot of Inchaffray, and received the sacrament, after which the same venerable dignitary performed mass in presence of the army, upon a small eminence situated in front of the line. The soldiers then took breakfast, and arranged themselves under their several banners. All this was done with great cheerfulness, yet with a mixture of gravity which showed that they fully estimated the importance of the mortal conflict in which they were about to be engaged; and the whole host being drawn up, and the royal standard of Scotland[1], with the numerous banners of the various barons and leaders, displayed, they proceeded to make knights, according to a usual practice before any great battle. Upon this occasion, Bruce bestowed that honour upon Walter, the young steward of Scotland, and many others according to their rank or services. When this ceremony was concluded, the army advanced in fair order from the higher ground, where they had first formed their line, into the plain; and the English, in like manner, came down from their original encampment, but in an order very different from the Scots — not in a line three or four deep, but in one immense compact column, composed of many divisions or squadrons, but all of them, from the narrowness of the ground over

[1] The stone where the royal standard was fixed is yet pointed out by the name of the Bore-stone: it has been much mutilated, but the bore, or perforation, into which the shaft of the standard was inserted, is still seen.

which they were compelled to move, so closely squeezed together, that they appeared a single square, and, as it seemed to the Scots, of impenetrable depth. Such was the situation of the main body of the English, where the King commanded in person; but the vaward, or advance, was still drawn up by itself, at a considerable distance from the rest, and more likely, from the ground which it occupied, and the less compacted nature of its array, to make a serious impression at the first onset.

Edward had now come near enough to the Scottish line to observe their order; and, to a weak and inexperienced monarch, unaccustomed to war, the spectacle of so small a body of men abiding the onset of his vast army was so singular and unexpected, that for a moment he doubted his own eyes. "What," said he, turning to Sir Ingram de Umfraville, a veteran leader in his father's wars, "will yon Scotsmen fight?"—"Be assured, my liege," replied Umfraville, "such is their intention; and I do assure you that to the oldest soldier here it is no very pleasant sight when this people that you see before you have once resolved to fight it out in a plain field; but if you would follow my counsel, the only way to induce them to break this formidable array is to feign a retreat. Try this, and, from what I know of their disposition, I can promise you that they will forget the injunction of their commander, and break down upon us in disorder. You will then be able to attack them at an advantage, and obtain an easy victory." Edward, however, fortunately for the Scots, disdained to follow this prudent advice.

At this moment, as the two armies were approaching to each other, the Abbot of Inchaffray, with a crucifix in his hand, and barefooted, walked slowly along the Scottish line; and as he passed, the soldiers knelt, and bent their faces to the earth. "See," cried the English monarch, "they yield, they ask mercy."—"They do, my liege," replied Umfraville, "but not of you. It is to God they kneel. — they will assuredly win or die." — "Be it so, then," said Edward, "we shall instantly put it to the test;" and, commanding the trumpets to sound, the English vaward under Hereford and Gloucester proceeded against the right wing of the enemy, commanded by Edward Bruce, and on approaching it pushed their horses to their full speed, and charged with a dreadful shock. The Scots, however, stood firm, and, to use the expressions of the chronicle, "met them sturdily, with levelled spears, and axes ground to a sharp edge [1]," so that in a short time it was apparent that, notwithstanding the gallantry of the English cavalry, the combat between them and the infantry under Edward Bruce was likely to be attended with the same result as that between Clifford and Randolph. Multitudes of the men-at-arms were unhorsed every moment, and slain before they could recover themselves by the axes or daggers of the Scots; whilst the horses, stabbed and maddened by the spears, either fell over the dead of the first ranks, or, rushing masterless in every direction, carried dismay and disorder into the rear of the squadron as it attempted to close in and occupy the vacant ground.

[1] Barbour, p. 251.

Soon after this, Randolph, who by this time had resumed his command of the Scottish centre, pushed forward, and attacked the front of the great square column into which their nine battles were compressed; and so small and insignificant did his division appear, when surrounded on all sides by the splendid chivalry of England, that, to use the strong expression of Barbour, although it was evident they gained ground upon the enemy, they seemed to be lost amid the crowd, as if they had been plunged into a sea of steel. Whilst the battle thus thickened around the Earl of Moray, and the English, compressed by the nature of the ground, found it impossible to throw out their wings, and avail themselves of their superiority in numbers, Walter the steward, and Douglas, brought up their division, and extending themselves by the side of Randolph, attacked the main army where he fought; so that the three battles of the Scots, commanded by Edward Bruce, the Earl of Moray, and Sir James Douglas, were now engaged with the enemy in the same line, and everywhere with desperate energy. The English archers, however, who were ten thousand strong, had taken up their position on an elevated field, from which they greatly distressed the Scots by their constant flight of arrows; and so many were slain or wounded by these dreadful missiles, that it was evident any lengthened continuance of the attack would have thrown the whole army into disorder. This peril was instantly detected by Bruce, who had not yet brought his own battle into action, but intently watched the progress of the fight. He was prepared, however, to meet it; and calling for Keith,

the marshal, commanded him, at the head of that small body of cavalry which he had probably reserved for this service, to wheel round the southern extremity of the marsh, and charge the archers in flank. So promptly was this order obeyed, that the English bowmen, who, unlike the Scottish infantry, had neither spears nor battle-axes to defend themselves, were instantly broken and dispersed; and although the squadron by which this service was performed did not exceed five hundred light-armed horse, so complete was the rout, that the archers do not appear to have rallied or made head again during the continuance of the action.[1]

The flight of their opponents encouraged the Scottish bowmen, whose strength, and dexterity in the use of their weapon, was far inferior to that of their southern antagonists; and, after discharging their sheafs of arrows, they rushed forward upon the enemy, wielding their daggers and battle-axes, and making a sanguinary havoc among them. All this was observed by Bruce, who watched every turn of the action. His own soldiers, he saw, were yet fresh and well-breathed;

[1] At an after period in the history of English war, Henry V., in his campaign in France, is known to have introduced the practice of each archer carrying with him into battle a sharpened stake, which he planted obliquely before him when he took up his ground against the enemy. In this manner the line was protected by a *chevaux de frise*, behind which the yeomen drew their bows, and plied their deadly trade in security.* But in the time of Edward no such invention had been discovered; and the consequence was, that the manœuvre of Keith proved completely successful.

* Rapin's History of England, by Tindal, vol. i. p. 513.

whilst the English, although they still fought with determination, began to show symptoms of impatience and exhaustion. "Take courage," said he to his leaders; "keep firmly together, press them yet a little more; and the day will be ours." It was at this moment that he brought up the reserve, which he commanded in person; it included the men of Carrick, Bute, Argyle, and the Isles; and these advancing boldly against the main body of their adversaries, the whole four battles of the Scots were engaged in one front. —"It was hideous to hear, and awful to behold," says Barbour: "the ear was deafened by the clang of arms, the breaking and thrusting of spears, and the shouts of the knights as they raised their war-cries. The horses, maddened with wounds, fled without their riders in every direction. The fields where they fought were red with blood, and covered with multitudes of the slain, with arms and surcoats defouled with gore, and pennons and scarfs torn and trampled under foot: over the heads of the combatants the air was still thick with arrows discharged at random by flying parties of the archers: the motions of the immense body of the English, compressed into a narrow space, and tossed to and fro by the agitations of the contest, looked like the waves of the sea; whilst the banners alternately rose and fell with the undulations of the battle; and the furious cries of the combatants were mingled with the groans of the wounded and the dying." [1]

Edward's whole force consisted of cavalry; and the repeated charges which had taken place in the commencement of the battle had not only

[1] Barbour, pp. 258, 259.

failed to break the Scottish line, but were each attended with greater bloodshed than the last; so that the remainder of the army became every moment less willing to expose themselves to almost certain destruction. This necessarily occasioned a wavering and undulation in the columns, which was soon detected by the Scots themselves; and, raising at once a great shout, "On them, on them! they fail!" a simultaneous charge was made along the whole Scottish front, which was performed with such compacted strength and resolution, that the enemy were driven back to a considerable distance from where they had commenced the action; and their enemies, gaining ground upon them, fought with an exasperation and desire of revenge which was embittered by the recollection of many years of oppression.

At this moment a remarkable event occurred, which had an important influence in deciding the fortune of the day. The large body of the camp servants and suttlers had been stationed, as already described, in a valley which lay immediately behind a small hill in the rear of the Scottish army, still known by the name of the Gillieshill.[1] Whether they acted from previous orders, or in obedience to their own suggestions, is not easily discoverable; but they suddenly determined to abandon the baggage and carriages, and to proceed down the hill against the enemy. The idea once adopted, was carried into execution with a regularity which certainly looks more like a previous arrangement than a sudden resolution. Sheets and blankets were fixed upon branches of trees and tent-poles, to serve instead of banners;

[1] Gilly, a servant; the servants' hill.

sticks, pike-staffs, oxen goads, or other rustic weapons, supplied the place of spears; and, forming themselves into various squadrons, under different leaders, they rushed down the hill towards the plain in one compact column of fifteen thousand men, presenting to those who regarded it from a distance, the appearance of a new army advancing to the assistance of the Scots. At this sight the English, already worn out by a contest which, from the first, had been disheartening, began to show evident signs of impatience; and some of the squadrons which formed the rearward divisions separated into little troops, and were seen looking over their shoulders as if hesitating whether to advance and take their fortune, or provide for their safety by deserting the field. These symptoms of approaching flight were instantly detected by Bruce, who, placing himself at the head of his own division, and shouting his "ensenye," or war-cry, made a charge on the main body of the enemy, by which they were entirely broken; the squadrons of Randolph, Edward Bruce, and Sir James Douglas, advancing at the same moment, with a fury that was stimulated to the highest pitch by the example of the King, the rout soon became total; and that vast host, which so lately looked as if it could have swallowed up the force opposed against it, broke away into a thousand pieces, and was seen dispersing in every direction over the face of the country.[1]

The King of England, who, although rash and presumptuous, was not deficient in courage, on seeing the discomfiture of his army, would have

[1] Barfour, p. 261.

obstinately remained in the field, had not the Earl of Pembroke seized his bridle-rein, and compelled him to fly, at the head of five hundred horse. Amongst these was a noble foreign knight of Rhodes, Sir Giles de Argentine, whose name was illustrious throughout Europe for the prowess he had exhibited in the Crusades, and who, during his residence at the court of England, had enjoyed the personal friendship of Bruce. Argentine's first care was to see the sovereign, whom the then served, in safety; having done so, and accompanied him a short way from the battle, he suddenly reined up his horse, and bade him farewell. "Your way, my liege," said he, "lies for England: mine must be to return to yonder host; for it hath never been our custom to fly; and there I must take my fortune." Saying this, he gave the spurs to his horse, and, shouting his war-cry, "An Argentine!" furiously charged the squadron of Edward Bruce, and, received upon the Scottish spears, fell dead, pierced with innumerable wounds. His death was deeply deplored by Bruce, who admired De Argentine as one of highest bred and most accomplished knights of his time. The Earl of Gloucester, who was mounted on a spirited and beautiful war-horse, which had that morning been presented to him by the King, on witnessing the total dispersion of the vaward, where he commanded, disdaining to fly, threw himself upon the Scottish line, and borne down, was soon cut to pieces. It is said, by an English historian of the time, that the Scots, who admired his valour, would willingly have saved him, but having neglected that day to wear his surcoat, which was embroidered with

his coat of arms, he could not be distinguished, and fell amid the mass of the slain.[1]

Edward, meanwhile, rode rapidly to Stirling, with the intention of throwing himself into the castle; but the English governor, Sir Philip Mowbray, urged the peril of such a proceeding, as the fortress must be immediately given up to the Scots; and the King, turning his horse's head, and avoiding the field of battle, fled at full gallop to Linlithgow.[2] At this moment, could the Scottish monarch have spared a sufficient force of cavalry to pursue the chase, there was the greatest likelihood that the King of England might have shared the fate of many of the noblest knights and barons amongst his subjects, who fell into the hands of the enemy. But such had been the mass of the English army, that, even in its dispersed and broken condition, its fragments presented a formidable appearance; and as Bruce was aware that a great body of the fugitives had taken refuge under the rock of Stirling castle, and that other parties still hovered in the neighbourhood, he dreaded the possibility of their making head against him, and strictly commanded the army to keep together, so long as there appeared any chance of such an occurrence. When Sir James Douglas, therefore, immediately after the flight of Edward, earnestly besought his sovereign to allow him to follow at the head of the cavalry, he could only spare him

[1] Thomas de la More, p. 594.

[2] Barbour says, Edward fled beneath the castle, right by the Round Table, and so made the circuit of the park, p. 264.

sixty horse, with which he pursued the fugitive monarch, and came up with him at Linlithgow. The English, however, were so superior in numbers, and kept so firmly together, that Douglas did not deem it prudent to charge, and satisfied himself by pursuing so closely, that any stragglers who dropped out of the ranks were instantly cut down or made prisoners. In this manner the flight and the pursuit continued, till Edward reached Dunbar, sixty miles from the field. Here he was received by the Earl of March, at that time an ally of England, and soon after escaped in a small fishing-boat to Bamborough Castle, where he began to breathe in safety.[1]

When Douglas departed, in pursuit of the English monarch, Bruce despatched a strong party against the crowds of fugitives who had taken refuge under the rock of Stirling. These surrendered themselves, without further debate; and the King, having ascertained the certainty of his victory, let loose his army upon the clouds of fugitives, and permitted them to have full scope for their love of plunder and of making prisoners. Before this business commenced, however, there had been a dreadful slaughter. Thirty thousand English were left dead upon the field; amongst which were two hundred knights and seven hundred esquires. Multitudes, in their flight, becoming entangled in the pits which Bruce had caused to be dug in one part of the field, were thrown down and slain; others, attempting to cross the rugged valley in which the Bannock runs, were overtaken by the Scottish infantry, and put to death in such

1 Barbour, p. 272.

numbers, that the heaps of men and horses which encumbered and blocked up the banks and the stream, made it easy for the pursuers to pass over the mass, as if it had been a bridge. The banners of twenty-seven earls and barons were laid in the dust, and their masters slain; amongst which, besides the Earl of Gloucester and Sir Giles de Argentine, were Sir Robert Clifford, a veteran commander, and Sir Edward Manley, seneschal of England. Of the Welsh troops which had joined the English army, a large body, under the command of Sir Maurice Berklay, fled from the field without suffering much loss; but as they were poorly armed, and almost naked, the Scottish peasantry rose upon them as they passed through the country, and either slew or took prisoners the whole squadron.[1]

From the extent of the English army, their admirable equipment, and the comfort, or rather the splendour, with which the great barons and knights surrounded themselves when they came into the field, the plunder of the English camp, and the ransom of the prisoners who fell into their hands, brought a great accession of wealth to the victors. The Monk of Malmesbury, an English contemporary historian of good authority, in a pathetic lamentation over the defeat, breaks out into the following apostrophe: — "O day of vengeance and of misfortune! day of disgrace and of perdition, unworthy to be included in the circle of the year, which tarnished the fame of England, and enriched the Scots with the plunder

1 Barbour, p. 266.: —
"For they well near all nakyt wer."

of the precious stuffs of our nation, to the extent of two hundred thousand pounds. Alas! of how many noble and accomplished knights, and high-spirited young soldiers, of what a store of excellent arms, and golden vessels and costly vestments, did one short and miserable day deprive us!"

Although the personal wrongs which had been sustained by Bruce, in the execution of his dearest friends and relatives, and the destruction of his kingdom, were deep and grievous, he did not allow himself to retaliate with that spirit of revenge, which would have found a ready justification in the feelings of the age. No unnecessary slaughter took place, no uncalled-for severity was exhibited; the wounded were treated with a benevolence and high-toned courtesy, which is mentioned with admiration by the English historians: the body of the brave Earl of Gloucester was reverently transported to a neighbouring church, where it was laid in state, and watched according to the catholic rites, after which it was sent to England, along with the remains of the noble Lord Clifford. Whilst the King examined the field on the ensuing morning, Sir Marmaduke de Twenge, who had concealed himself all night in the woods, suddenly came forward, and, kneeling at the feet of the monarch, surrendered himself his prisoner; upon which Bruce kindly raised him up, and, embracing the English knight, entreated him to be his guest, not his captive; which he accordingly became; and on his return he was dismissed, not

only without ransom, but with sumptuous presents.[1]

Such was the battle of Bannockburn. When we consider the obstinacy with which it was contested, the military talents exhibited by Bruce and his principal leaders, the disparity in the numerical force and the military equipment of the two armies, the important consequences with which the victory was attended, and the great and memorable precedent of successful resistance to the unlicensed spirit of conquest, which it established in the face of the world, the minuteness of these details, extracted from authentic documents, will be pardoned by the reader.

On the day after the battle, Mowbray, the English governor of Stirling castle, capitulated to Bruce, according to the terms of the previous treaty, and, after the delivery of the fortress, entered into the Scottish service; the Earl of Hereford, also, who had thrown himself into Bothwell, where he was besieged by Edward Bruce, after a short resistance, surrendered, and was soon exchanged for five prisoners of high rank, Bruce's wife, his sister Christian, his daughter Marjory, Wishart, bishop of Glasgow, and the young Earl of Mar, nephew to the King. So certain had Edward considered the victory, that amongst the attendants of the host he brought with him one Baston, a Carmelite friar, whose poetical attainments were then reputed to be of the highest order, and to whom the King had prospectively

[1] Barbour, p. 269.:—
"And geff him gret gyftes therto."

committed the task of celebrating his arms. This unfortunate son of the muses, amid the dispersion of the English army, fell into the hands of the enemy, and on being brought to Bruce, was commanded, as his most appropriate ransom, to compose a poem on the triumph of the Scots at Bannockburn; an injunction which led to an extraordinary series of Leonine hexameters, which have been preserved by an ancient Scottish historian. It may be presumed, from the internal evidence which it contains, that the framework of the poem had been ready previous to the battle, and that most of the descriptions dealt in those accommodating generalities which, with a little ingenuity, could be brought into the service of either country.

The consequences of this victory upon the spirit of the two nations were such as might have been anticipated. The courage and resolution of the Scots rose to a pitch which was rather dreaded than applauded by their great leader, who was well aware that it is equally dangerous to have an over-contempt as an over-apprehension of an enemy. On the other hand, the temporary depression and panic which seized their opponents was deep and universal; and a contemporary English historian has affirmed, that, at this time, a hundred of his countrymen would have fled from the face of two or three Scottish soldiers.[1] The monarch himself, who had experienced so fatal a reverse of fortune, soon removed from Berwick, dreading the immediate investment of this important city, to York, where

[1] Walsingham, p. 106.

he held a parliament, in which the discontent, and defiance, of his principal barons, and his own capricious character, defeated all measures proposed for the defence of the kingdom. It lay, therefore, open to the enemy; and Bruce was not slow to avail himself of its weakness. Twice, in the course of the same year; did his army invade and ravage England; on the first occasion penetrating Northumberland, laying waste the bishopric of Durham; and, under the command of Edward Bruce and Douglas, advancing to Richmond in Yorkshire, which, along with Appleby and other towns, they burnt to the ground. In the second inroad, we learn, from the contemporary Chronicle of Lanercost Priory, that the Scots entered England through Redesdale and Tynedale, marking their progress by desolation and compelling the more wealthy inhabitants to purchase their safety by paying down large sums of money. It does not appear that, during either of these expeditions, the invading army experienced a single check from an English force, owing to the unhappy disunion between the King and his barons; and to such despair were the inhabitants of the border districts reduced by this abandonment of the country to the unlicensed fury of their adversaries, that they did not hesitate to swear allegiance to King Robert, and thus to obtain a protection which, as English subjects, it was impossible for them to enjoy.

Despairing, at length, of any assistance from Edward, the chief men of the border counties assembled at York, and formed themselves into an independent confederacy, for the protection of the

country; for which purpose they raised a considerable military force, and appointed four captains, who successively commanded it. Edward at first confirmed this appointment, anxious by any means to raise a force which might protect the soil from insult; but these bands of fierce soldiers, who, from the mode in which they had been levied, believed themselves independent of the government, soon became more dreadful scourges to the country than the enemies they had been designed to repel. "At first," says a historian who paints from the life, and to whose alliterative eloquence it is difficult to do justice in a translation, "these brave men behaved themselves tolerably well; but when provisions and pay began to grow scarce, from volunteers they became violators, plundering the property which they ought to have protected. In the towns and villages, the moment they entered, every thing that was eatable disappeared; the wretched inhabitants not only saw the last of their bread, corn, kids, sheep, swine, and other bestial, of their hens and capons, their cheeses and their flour-girnels, but were stripped to their shirts and drawers, losing their breeches and their basins, their trousers and their tankards, and, worst of all, the gold and silver which they had stored up against an evil day. The numbers of these depredators became soon so great, that they were afraid of no force which could be brought against them; and this dreadful state of licence and robbery actually continued for four years."[1]

[1] Walsingham, p. 109.

The King of Scotland, aware of this reduced condition of his adversary, despatched letters to England declaring his earnest desire that all hostilities should cease, and requesting a safe-conduct for Sir Neill Campbell, Sir Gilbert de la Haye, and other commissioners, who would inform Edward upon what conditions he was ready to accede to a pacification. This attempt, however, proved unsuccessful, although Edward appointed commissioners to negotiate with the Scottish envoys. The probable cause of failure seems to have been a punctilio of Edward, who still withheld the kingly title from his victorious rival, and designated him in his letters of safe conduct as "Sir Robert Brus." The consequence was an immediate resumption of the war, and a third invasion of England, in which the Scottish king compelled the most opulent barons of the border once more to purchase an immunity from plunder by the advance of a large tribute; and during the continuance of which, multitudes of the inhabitants flocked into the Scottish camp, and tendered their allegiance, that they might escape from ruin and captivity.[1]

Scotland, meantime, which for so long a period had suffered the extremities of war, began to breathe anew: the sources of internal industry revived; and the people, no longer weighed down by the load of injury which they had so long sustained, became cheerful, full of loyalty and affection to the monarch under whose valour they had recovered freedom.[2] At the same period,

[1] Chron. Lanercost, apud Tyrrel, vol. iii. p. 262.
[2] Barbour, p. 275.

if we may judge from Edward's endeavours to interrupt it, the foreign trade of the country was considerable, and the Scottish merchants found a ready market for their hides, skins, and wool in Flanders; importing, in return, supplies of corn and various kinds of provisions, of armour, iron, and other necessaries, in the manufacture of which they were greatly behind the Continent. Letters were despatched by the king of England to the earls of Flanders and Hainault, and the duke of Brabant, earnestly dissuading them from opening their ports to the Scottish vessels; but these wealthy states were too wise to pay any attention to such remonstrances.

The year which succeeded the battle of Bannockburn was prolific of important events in the life of Bruce. On the 26th of April, 1315, a parliament assembled at Ayr; and the states of the kingdom proceeded in a solemn manner to settle the succession to the crown. It was determined, with the consent of the King and his daughter and sole heir, Marjory, that the crown, in the event of Bruce's death without heirs male of his body, should descend to Edward Bruce, his brother, whose experience in war, long tried in his strenuous defence of the rights and liberties of Scotland, rendered him worthy of so high a dignity; failing Edward Bruce and his heirs male, it was provided that the succession should open to the Lady Marjory Bruce, and at her death to the nearest heir descending lineally from the body of King Robert Bruce, provided that she did not marry without the consent of the King her father,

or, upon his death, of the majority of the estates of the kingdom.[1]

It is here impossible not to remark a singular departure from the ordinary rules of succession, in the circumstance that Edward Bruce, the uncle, excludes the daughter of King Robert: a provision which can hardly be accounted for, except upon the idea that the monarch dreaded the fierce and aspiring character of his brother; and consented, with equal wisdom and magnanimity, to wave the right vested in his daughter, rather than expose his country to any hazard of a civil warfare."[2] The sacrifice, upon the part of Bruce, was the more remarkable, as, at the moment in which it was made, he had determined to bestow Marjory upon Walter, the hereditary high steward of Scotland, a noble youth, then in his twenty-second year, and had distinguished himself by his excellent conduct at Bannockburn. This important marriage accordingly took place soon after the meeting of the parliament; and, as is well known, gave heirs both to the Scottish crown, and, in after ages, to the throne of the United Kingdom. But an event which occurred at this time imparted a new direction to the ambition of Edward Bruce, and to the warlike policy of the King his brother.

1 Fordun and Goodal, vol. ii. p. 257., and Robertson's Index to the Charters, pp. vii. viii. Appendix.

2 "This Edward was a man of a fierce temper, and of so proud and high a heart, that he would not live with his brother in peace, unless for his own portion he consented to give him up the half of his kingdom." Fordun a Hearne, p. 1009.

The Irish of Ulster had long groaned under the exactions of the Anglo-Irish nobility; and the fierce chieftains of that district, driven to despair by the oppression of the government, sent an embassy to Scotland, imploring the protection of Bruce, and offering their cordial co-operation in any attempt to complete the conquest of the country, and expel the English from the island. This negotiation at length proceeded so far, that an offer of the crown of Ireland was made to Edward Bruce, by the heads of those septs with whom the communication had been opened: and although the Scottish king did not disguise from himself its danger and difficulties, there were some considerations which strongly urged him to engage in the enterprise. It gave employment to a brother whose ambition already disturbed the state, and promised to carry out of the country those restless and discontented spirits who were attached to his interest, and whose habits, under such a leader, might have eventually occasioned the utmost trouble in his kingdom. It divided the attention and the military strength of the English; and although it was problematical whether so small a force as Scotland could then afford could ever complete the conquest of Ireland, or, when achieved, be able to retain the acquisition, still the enterprise was by no means so desperate as that which had already been brought to a successful issue by Bruce in his own country, where, from a persecuted wanderer, he now found himself a victorious monarch. The invasion of Ireland was therefore resolved on; and Edward

Bruce, to whose fiery and impetuous disposition, trained up amid strife and victory, nothing seemed too arduous, readily cherished the hope that the time was not far distant when, instead of living on the prospect of an eventual throne, he should wield a real sceptre even in the lifetime of his brother.

He accordingly embarked at Ayr, in the month of May, 1315, and landed on the 25th of the same month, near Carrickfergus, at the head of an army which did not exceed six thousand men. These, however, it must be recollected, were chosen troops, trained for the last nine years in constant war, admirably equipped, and commanded by veteran officers. The principal leader was Randolph, whose calm and steady judgment the King, no doubt, intended to neutralise the impetuosity of his brother. Along with him went Sir Philip Mowbray, Sir John Soulis, Sir John Stewart, Sir Fergus of Ardrossan, and Ramsay of Ochterhouse. Scarcely had the Scots set foot upon the shore, when the Lords Mandeville, Bisset, and Logan assembled an English force which greatly exceeded them in numbers, besides being joined by a tumultuous body of Irish troops, whose ferocious looks and manners, and exceeding scanty clothing gave them an appearance little different from savages. The Scottish commander, however, undismayed by the superiority of the enemy, whose united divisions amounted to twenty thousand men, proceeded in two battles towards Carrickfergus; and Randolph, who commanded the advance, coming in contact with the English and

Irish army, charged them with such impetuosity, that the first ranks of their line were broken and put to flight; and the second so handled by Edward Bruce, who commanded the Scottish rear, that in a few hours the whole army was entirely routed.[1]

The Scots now proceeded forwards; entered Carrickfergus without resistance, and taking up their quarters in the town, laid siege to the castle, which, having been lately provisioned and strongly garrisoned, made a stout resistance, and annoyed them by frequent and desperate sallies. Encouraged by his success in his first battle against the English, twelve of the Irish princes, or reguli, leading with them a wild and unruly multitude of their retainers, now joined Bruce. A great proportion of these auxiliaries were cavalry and archers; but their tumultuary mode of fighting, the inferiority of their arms, their exposed bodies, bare heads, and hair streaming over their shoulders, their savage manners, unintelligible language, and contempt of discipline, made it almost impossible for them to co-operate with the soldiers of Bruce and Randolph, who regarded them with feelings of strangeness and aversion. The consequence of this was soon felt, in their becoming lukewarm in the cause, from which they proceeded to desertion, and at last to open hostility. Two thousand of these ferocious Irishry, as they are denominated by the contemporary biographer, under the command of Dermod Macarthy, chief of the men of Desmond,

[1] Barbour, p. 279. Annals of Ireland, in Camden's Britannia, sub anno 1315.

and another petty prince, named Macgullane, beset the advanced division of the Scottish army in the pass of Innermallane; but after an obstinate contest, in which their spearmen and archers experienced their inequality in a contest with the steel-clad knights and compact columns of a veteran army, their whole body was either put to the sword, or dispersed in the neighbouring forest.

From Innermallane, Edward Bruce continued his impetuous progress towards the town of Dundalk, where the enemy were assembled in strength under the command of Sir Richard Clare, the Earls of Kildare and Desmond, and Sir Edmund Butler, the justiciary of Ireland. Another defeat was here sustained by the English; and the Scottish troops, without experiencing any severe loss, stormed Dundalk, where they lived at free quarters for some days, and after enriching themselves with plunder, marched southwards, wasting the country in their desolating progress, and reducing the towns and villages to ashes. It is impossible, indeed, to account for the uniform success which attended the arms of Edward in the first part of this remarkable campaign, except upon the belief that the English leaders, weakened by dissensions among themselves, did not heartily oppose him; whilst the Irish, who pretended to preserve their allegiance to the English crown, and acted as auxiliaries, rather impeded than assisted the military operations. It is not to be forgotten, also, that the Earl of Moray, and the brother of the King of Scotland, from the great

experience which they had gained in the war of independence, were, perhaps, at this moment, two of the best officers in Europe; and that the soldiers whom they commanded were excellently armed, and in a state of high military discipline; whilst we have the testimony of contemporary historians, that the frequent defeats lately experienced by the English, had, for a season, chilled the hearts of that most gallant people.

Pressing onwards through a hilly country towards the forest of Kilrose[1], the Scots again encountered in its vicinity a large force, which was composed entirely of cavalry; upon which occasion their leaders, profiting by the lesson taught them at Bannockburn, fought entirely on foot, and with a success which once more demonstrated the superiority of a square of infantry over the best cavalry which could be brought against them. After no very lengthened contest, the Irish army was completely broken, and the field covered with the dead: but Edward, fearful of the consequences of engaging in the pursuit of an army whose fragments were larger than his whole force, after having secured their prisoners, led back his forces into the forest, where he was soon joined by Fym O'Dymsy, an Irish prince[2], who offered to be his guide into his own territories, which he described as rich in provisions for the support of his troops.

This native chief, however, was secretly in the

[1] Probably Kilrois, an ancient abbey in the county of Down.

[2] Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 511.

service of the enemy; and the Scots were reduced to grievous extremities by confiding in his treacherous promises. He conducted them across a large river, probably the Ban, upon which the town of Drogheda is now situated; and, under his direction, they pitched their encampment, in a low plain, upon the banks of a rivulet. He then left them, with the promise of speedily returning with provisions; but evening came, and brought no appearance of their friend; so that the soldiers retired to rest weary and full of dark suspicions; for it had been soon discovered that, however fair the spot was to appearance, the country around it was deserted by the inhabitants, who had removed their cattle and provisions to a distance. But this was not all. At midnight the Scots were awakened in terror by a hollow sound like an earthquake, which, on its near approach, changed into the roar and rushing of water; and in an instant, before they could collect their armour and camp furniture, the whole plain where they had pitched their tents and huts was inundated; Bruce and Randolph with great difficulty roused and mustered their little army in time to save their lives; but their arms and armour sustained much injury; and a great proportion of their tents, wagons, and horses were entirely lost. When morning broke, their situation was soon discovered to be full of peril. They had been artfully led by the Irish chief to a plain which could be inundated by the discharge of the waters of a lake at no great distance, and whose outlet had been dammed up for the purpose. They now saw themselves placed upon a

narrow height, on one side of which the river Ban cut off their retreat into Ulster; whilst the flood, which had nearly proved fatal to them, was gradually gaining ground on the other, and rendered it impossible for them to advance into Westmeath. From this distress they were happily rescued by the appearance of Thomas of Doune, a Scottish privateer, who happened at this moment to be cruising off the coast of Ireland with four ships. Hearing of the misfortunes of his countrymen, he instantly sailed up the Ban, transported the army across the river, and, after this valuable assistance, returned to his own element.

The Scots now advanced from the deserted country to which they had been decoyed, into an inhabited district near the town of Coigners, the ancient Connor, in the county Down[1], where the Earl of Ulster, who foolishly rejected the assistance of Butler the justiciary, had assembled an army, which, including the Irish levies in the service of England, nearly quadrupled the Scottish force. "There were along with the Earl of Ulster," says Barbour, "the Earls of Kildare and Desmond, Sir John de Bermingham, the Lords Mandeville and Fitzwarren, with the Bissets, Logans, and also the savages" (meaning the wild Irish). The military skill of Randolph and Bruce was presently seen in the success with which they repeatedly cut off the English convoys; and these smaller actions, incensing the enemy, led soon after to a battle in which their whole force

[1] Beauford's Map of Ancient Ireland. Collectanea De Rebus Hibernicis, No. xi., Barbour, p. 294. Annals of Ireland, in Camden's Britannia.

was routed. By the advice of Sir Philip Mowbray, the Scots in this battle put in practice a stratagem, the success of which argues little in favour of the military ability of Ulster. They abandoned their encampment, and took up a position which, from the wooded nature of the country, was concealed from the enemy; their tents and pavilions were left standing as before; their carriages, wagons, and baggage were drawn up within the lines, and their banners and pennons fixed in the earth, and exposed to view, as if the knights and men-at-arms whose devices they bore had been beside them to receive the assault of the enemy. Owing, to the inexperience of Ulster, this simple device succeeded. The English, despising their opponents, attacked the camp at the head of their whole force; and in the first moments of their surprise and confusion, when occupied with plunder, and dispersed and entangled amongst the trenches, tents, and wagons, they were fiercely assaulted on both flanks by Bruce and Randolph, who dispersed their army with great slaughter, and took prisoners many of their chief leaders.[1]

The consequences of this defeat were the immediate occupation of the town of Connor by the Scots, the flight of Ulster into the south of Ireland, the resumption of the siege of Carrickfergus by Edward Bruce, and the total revolt of the Irish inhabitants of Connaught and Meath from the English alliance. The possessions of the English settlers in these districts were cruelly ravaged; and the spirit of national ani-

[1] Annals of Ireland, sub anno 1315; apud Camden's Britannia.

mosity between the Irish and those whom they considered intruders and usurpers proceeded to a height which led to horrible excesses. It was evident, however, from the superiority which they had hitherto maintained in every encounter, and from the complete dispersion of the English army in the battle of Connor, that the conquest of Ireland by the Scottish army was not so utterly vain and chimerical a project as it might have been at first imagined; and the Earl of Moray, having passed over to Scotland for the purpose of obtaining a reinforcement, returned, after an absence of three months, with a small but select body of five hundred men-at-arms.

Bruce had employed this interval in pressing the siege of Carrickfergus; but the strength of the castle, denominated, in the ancient language of the Irish, Dansobarky, or the impregnable fortress, defied his utmost efforts; and as his army began to suffer severely for want of provisions, he was compelled, on being joined by Randolph, to abandon the enterprise, and to push forward to Dundalk, from which he advanced, without meeting any material opposition, through the county of Meath into Kildare. It is difficult to account for the rapid marches of the Scots, and the depth to which they penetrated into the heart of the country, except upon the supposition that they had unwisely reduced to a state of absolute desert the districts through which they passed; and that vast tracts of land being also wasted by the ravages of the Irish, the scarcity of provisions and the pressure of hunger forced them to go to great distances in search of food. In this manner

they proceeded to Arscoll, in the province of Leinster, where they were met by an army which, although superior in numbers, was enfeebled by jealousies and disputes amongst its leaders, Butler, Fitz-Thomas, and Arnold Lord Poer. On the first charge of the Scots, these barons, forgetful of their knightly character and reputation in arms, refused to act in concert, and fled from the field.

Edward Bruce, elated by these reiterated successes, began to believe himself invincible. But an enemy more formidable than the English was now at hand, in the form of a famine, grievous and unexampled beyond any which had been experienced in Ireland. Reduced by this awful visitant to the last extremity, and dreading the effects of mutiny and discontent amongst their soldiers, Randolph and Bruce broke up their encampment between Geshill and Offaley, and retreated through Meath into Ulster, where provisions were more plentiful, and the vicinity to Scotland placed them within reach of reinforcement and supplies. In this retreat the Scots, on arriving near Kenlis, found themselves suddenly in the presence of a large but tumultuary force of the English and Irish, who, under the command of Roger Lord Mortimer, of Wigmore, and Phelim O'Connor, king of Connaught, attempted to intercept their progress, with the same unhappy result which had attended every effort made by the English since the commencement of the war. On the present occasion it is probable that the greater part of this army consisted of Irish; for Mortimer, as his subsequent career demonstrated, was an able commander, and, if left to

act for himself, none was more likely to have restored confidence and success to his countrymen: but the undisciplined and tumultuary attack of the native Irish rendered it impossible for their allies to act with any order or regularity; and the Scots, well accustomed to such enemies, knew that, after the first wild assault, they would have an easy victory. This accordingly happened; and, whilst Mortimer and a part of his troops effected their retreat, and, after a rapid flight from the field, threw themselves into Dublin, the Irish, under their half-armed chieftains, made a desperate resistance, and were at last almost entirely cut to pieces.[1]

In the month of April, 1315, the Earl of Moray a second time departed to Scotland, with the purpose of bringing reinforcements; and Edward Bruce assumed the office of high justiciar, or chief civil magistrate, of Ulster; sitting in judgment on the cases brought before him, inflicting capital punishments, and attempting to consolidate the provinces which he had reduced into something like a regular government. This, however, was no easy task, considering the fierce and indomitable nature of the materials he had to work upon, and the complicated and jarring interests of the various parties among whom the country was divided. The native Irish chiefs, and the various septs, or clans, over which they enjoyed a feeble and limited authority, evinced a mixture of treachery and fickleness which rendered it impossible to employ them in any enterprise of importance. At one moment zealous

[1] Annals of Ireland, sub anno 1315.

against the English, at another betraying and putting to the sword their allies the Scots, and soon after engaged in mortal and sanguinary struggles amongst themselves, it was impossible for any party to enter into league with them without very speedily repenting it.

Whilst the King of Scotland, by means of his brother, thus continued the war, and produced so formidable a diversion in Ireland, the tide of his success at home continued to flow on without the slightest check. Not a castle, or even fortalice, throughout the country was now left in the hands of the enemy. In an expedition which he undertook to the Western Isles, where John of Lorn still lurked, and made a feeble attempt to re-establish his independence, the entire archipelago was reduced under his authority; and whilst his indefatigable captain, James of Douglas, conducted an army into England, and once more plundered with impunity the border counties, the Scottish privateers, in concert with their allies the Flemings, infested the coasts and seaports on both sides of the island, and wrought much damage to the English commerce and shipping.

On his return from his maritime campaign in the isles, Bruce had the satisfaction to hear that his only daughter, the Princess Marjory, wife of the steward, had been delivered of a son; but the joy produced in the kingdom by so auspicious an event was instantly clouded by the death of the youthful mother, who expired on the 2d of March, 1315; a calamity of serious import, as the King and his brother Edward Bruce were

both childless, and the hope of succession after their death rested on the precarious life of the infant now born, who afterwards ascended the throne by the title of Robert the Second; the first of a race of monarchs as illustrious in the early ages of their dynasty by their talents as they became remarkable, during its decline, for their misfortunes.

Whilst these events occurred in Scotland, Edward Bruce lay with his little army before Carrickfergus, and pressed the siege of that fortress with his usual vigour. The garrison, notwithstanding that they began to suffer grievously from want of food, defended the place with determined bravery; and the Scots, who had wasted and consumed the surrounding country, beginning likewise to be in want, a temporary cessation of hostilities was agreed on. At this crisis, when Bruce, protected, as he imagined, from all assault by a truce, had permitted a great part of his army to disperse for forage, a fleet of fifteen vessels, under the command of Sir Thomas Mandeville, a veteran leader, sailed from Dublin, having on board a considerable force, and, under cover of night, succeeded in throwing themselves into the castle. Whether justly or not, it is difficult to determine, Mandeville considered that the truce did not apply to him; and, at the head of his whole troops, made a sudden and desperate sally. Even in time of truce, however, the discipline and regularity of war had been kept up by the Scottish leader, and the night watches throughout the camp were punctually posted and relieved; whilst Bruce, with the small propor-

tion of his army which remained, trusting to the conditions of truce, lay asleep within the camp. On the night in which the attack was made, Neil Fleming, a cadet of the ancient house of Wigton, commanded the watch, which consisted of a party of sixty men; and, instantly perceiving that they were surprised, and aware that every thing depended on gaining time, he determined, with heroic resolution, to sacrifice himself for the safety of the army. He despatched a soldier to rouse his commander, and, advancing towards the drawbridge over which the troops of Mandeville defiled in great force, confronted them at the head of his little phalanx with a resolution which astonished the enemy. "Now," cried he, "it will be seen who are brave men, and will die for their lord." This timely check had the desired effect, in giving Bruce and his soldiers a short interval to arm themselves; but nothing less than a miracle could have saved the devoted band of Fleming; and, in a short time, he was himself mortally wounded, and his companions slain, not a man escaping. By this time Mandeville had divided his force into three parts, which entered the town on different sides; and the division which he himself commanded was met by Bruce and his household, twelve "wight," or hardy men, according to the phrase of Barbour, who were waiting in his chamber when the alarm came to the camp. These, fortunately, were picked knights and soldiers, and one of them, named Gilbert Harper, a man of great strength and stature, throwing himself before his companions, with his battle-axe in his hand, felled the foremost of the

English, and, recognising Mandeville, who was the next, struck him such a blow upon the helmet, that the knight reeled in his saddle, and fell to the ground, where he was instantly despatched by Bruce's own dagger. His soldiers, dismayed by the death of their commander, gave back, and at this critical moment, Sir Fergus of Ardrossan, at the head of a considerable force, attacked them in the flank; whilst the rest of the Scots, who were quartered through the town, arming themselves, and rushing forward to the scene of combat, seconded his efforts, as they successively arrived by different streets. The exertions of Bruce were at length successful, and concluded in the total rout of the enemy, who were driven from the town; and, before they could make good their retreat into the castle, almost entirely cut to pieces. In addition to this, Magille Phadrick, one of the Irish native chiefs in the Scottish service, succeeded in grappling and boarding four of their ships, which were riding in the harbour, whose entire crews he instantly put to the sword.

It was now morning; and Bruce anxiously repaired to the spot where Fleming had made his stand, and found the young warrior yet breathing and sensible, although in the agonies of death. Around him lay thickly piled the bodies of his companions: and the sight of the brave man, who had so nobly devoted himself, entirely overcame his master. He hung and wept over him, took him, all bleeding and wounded, in his arms, and kissed his cheek, praised his valour, assured him he had saved the army, and stood beside him till he died. He then caused the body to be con-

veyed from the field, commanded it to be embalmed and laid in state, and afterwards interred with the utmost honour and solemnity. It was the more remarkable, says the contemporary historian, that he made such lamentation, as his character was hardy almost to harshness; and, on common occasions, it was not usual for the Lord Edward either to bewail any disaster himself, or suffer others who were with him to indulge in grief.[1] Such are the bright touches of generous feeling which occasionally break out to relieve for a moment the dark and horrid features of feudal war.

The consequence of the defeat of Mandeville was a negotiation with the governor of Carrickfergus; who, after suffering such extremities of famine as compelled him to support his garrison upon the hides of horses, and, if we are to believe the Irish annals, to make a more horrid meal upon the bodies of Scottish prisoners, at last agreed to capitulate. The place was accordingly delivered into the hands of the Scots, after a siege of almost unexampled duration and obstinacy; and, immediately upon its surrender, Edward Bruce was solemnly crowned King of Ireland on the 2d of May, 1316.[2]

In the mean time, his royal brother, at the solicitation of Randolph, formed the resolution of

1 Barbour, p. 301.: —

"Sic meyne he maid men had great ferly;
For he was not custommably
Wont for to meyne men ony thing,
Na wald nocht hear men mak menyng"

Annals of Ireland, sub anno 1315.

2 Irish Annals, apud Camden.

conducting in person a body of troops for the prosecution of the Irish war. He accordingly intrusted the government of his kingdom to the Steward and Douglas; embarked with a select, though not numerous, body of cavalry and infantry; and, after a prosperous passage, landed at Carrickfergus, where he was received with state by his brother. After three days spent in conviviality and rejoicing, intelligence was brought that the English, under the command of Clare and other Anglo-Irish barons, had assembled in Ulster; and the two brothers, without delay, led their forces against them. Clare, although he commanded an army 40,000 strong, resolved at first to avoid a general action; and, better acquainted with the country than his adversaries, concealed the greater part of his troops in a wood through which he expected the Scots to pass. Nor was he disappointed in his conjecture; for the enemy advanced through the forest in two great divisions, the vaward led by Edward, and the rearward by Robert Bruce and Randolph. Edward, with his usual impetuosity, pressed forward at a rapid rate, careless of the suspicious nature of the place, and taking little heed to keep up his communication with the rear, of which he soon lost sight. This was just what the English desired; and they accordingly allowed his division to pass without discovering themselves. By this time, the Scottish King began to enter the defile, at the head of the rearward, which consisted of 5000 excellent troops; and his experienced eye, long practised in war,

at once detected the dangerous description of the ground, and the facilities for attack which it offered to the enemy. At this moment, some light-armed English yeomen made their appearance; and two of them pressing near the Scots, discharged their arrows; upon which Bruce gave strict orders that none should, leave the ranks, but preserve close order. "These fellows would not come so near," said he. "unless they had support at hand." A young knight, however, Sir Colin Campbell, either had not overheard the orders or carelessly forgot them: giving spurs to his horse, he pushed forward from the ranks, and, overtaking one of the archers, slew him with his lance, whilst his companion retreated amongst the trees, and discharged an arrow with such good aim, that he mortally wounded Campbell's steed. All this passed in an instant; but the King, irritated at such conduct, rode hastily up to Campbell, and, reproving him for his folly, struck him over the head with his truncheon so severely, that he reeled in his saddle, and would have fallen to the ground, had he not been supported by his companions, who interceded for his pardon, and, with difficulty, obtained it. "He little deserves such sympathy," said Bruce: "such disobedience might ruin us all. Keep together, on pain of death: we shall have our hands full presently." Scarcely were these words spoken, when a body of English archers made their appearance; and, in a few minutes afterwards, upon a sudden turn of the road which led into a plain, they emerged from the wood, and found themselves in presence

of the whole English army, which was drawn up in four battles or squadrons.[1]

The King defiled into the plain with admirable order; and, forming into a compact square, instantly charged the English. In the battle which ensued, the discipline of the Scottish army, and that confidence which is generally created by a long course of success, were exhibited in a striking manner. And, although out-numbered by nearly eight to one, the little army of Bruce seem to have entertained no misgiving as to the certainty of their victory; and their efforts, encouraged by the presence of their sovereign and Randolph, who exposed themselves like the lowest soldiers, led, after an obstinate contest, to the result anticipated. The army of Clare was dispersed, and the flower of the chivalry of Ireland left dead upon the field.

The rear division having soon joined the vaward, Edward Bruce gave way to expressions of deep disappointment that he had not been present to share in their glory. " It was entirely owing, brother," said Bruce, " to thine own folly and remissness: surely thou hast seen enough of war to know that it must ever be a matter of extreme peril for the vaward to advance so far forward as to lose its communication, and, consequently, fail to afford its support to the rear."[2] This victory, however, was to a great degree neutralised by a defeat soon afterwards experienced by the united forces of the two kings. The particulars of the action are not to be found in the historians of either country; and it is certain

[1] Barbour, p. 316. [2] Barbour, p. 319.

that the Scots were soon after enabled to advance in greater force than before towards the capital. Yet in this conflict with the Anglo-Irish, under the command of Hugh Lord Bisset, Sir Alan Stewart of Dernely, a principal commander in the Scottish army, was made prisoner, and 300 of their best troops slain.[1]

Bruce, however, continued to push forward to Dublin, where the Earl of Ulster had concentrated his army, and on the safety of which the permanency of the English government in Ireland materially depended. At this dangerous conjuncture it was asserted, probably on no better ground than suspicion, that the Earl of Ulster, whose sister Bruce had married, was in the Scottish interest, and that the powerful family of the Lacies carried on a secret intelligence with them, and provided them with guides. Irritated at these reports, the citizens of Dublin seized Ulster, and cast him into prison. With a patriotic resolution, which rose superior to selfishness, they demolished part of the suburbs, and employed the materials for the repair of the walls round the city; but, the Scots broke through their defences, and destroyed by fire the remaining part of the suburbs which the citizens had left standing.[2] They next took possession of Castle Cnoc, a fortress built near the present Phœnix Park, and appear to have deliberated whether it would be expedient to prosecute the siege of the capital: but the

1 Irish Annals, apud Camden.

2 "Majors pars suburbii civitatis Dublinii, in Hibernia, per Scotos destructa fuit."—Calendar. Rot. Pat. Rot. 2di Edwardi II. m. 14.

bravery of the citizens; the certainty that, even if successful, the enterprise must be tedious; and the pressure of want, which began to be felt in the camp, determined them to advance into the county of Kilkenny, where supplies were likely to be more abundant.

It is evident that, in his campaign in Ireland, Bruce found himself surrounded by difficulties nearly similar to those which had been encountered by Edward I. in his Scottish wars. The country which formed the seat of hostilities was reduced almost to a desert, by the ferocious conflicts amongst the Irish themselves, the outrages of their English masters, and the fury of the Scots. He had no fleet to bring him provisions; and the English army, actuated, probably, by the same policy which had directed the operations of the King of Scotland in the war of liberty, retired from the enemy, and permitted them to advance into the heart of the country, with the conviction that the farther they penetrated the greater would be their distress, and the more certain and difficult their retreat. It must seem singular that Bruce, aware as he must have been of the extremities to which he had reduced Edward by a policy similar to this, should not have so far profited by the lesson as to avoid the same error; but, from the limited information which remains of this portion of his Irish campaign, it would be unfair to form an opinion against him. A generous desire not to desert his brother, while there remained any hope of establishing him in his new kingdom; an anxiety to ascertain the probability of success by personal observation and

an intercourse with the native Irish; and an expectation of reaching at length a richer district, were, in all probability, the motives by which he was regulated. Perhaps, also, there was a little weakness in his conduct, and a desire to add to the unfading honour of having established the freedom of his country the inferior glory of braving the English in their own dominions, may have impelled him to undertake an enterprise which his better reason should have condemned.

Upon whatever principles he acted, the result demonstrated that the permanent occupation of Ireland was impracticable. He advanced from Leixlip to Naas, from thence to Callin; after onwards across the centre of Ireland as far as Limerick. In this progress, the native chiefs, instead of flocking to his standard, and providing supplies, manifested a disposition nearly as hostile to the Scots as to the English; he was joined by no auxiliaries; and his soldiers, who had subsisted for some time on the skins of beasts and the dead bodies of their horses, perished in great numbers, and murmured under the extremities of famine.[1]

In the mean time, the English concentrated their army in the vicinity of Kilkenny, under the deputy Lord Edmund Butler, and Fitz-John, Earl of Kildare, assisted by the Barons Clare, Poer, Rochfort, and Fitzmaurice. Their assembled forces amounted to an army of 30,000 men; and, had they been unanimous in their opinions, or suffered themselves to be directed by any man of military judgment, the situation

[1] Irish Annals, apud Camden's Britannia.

of Bruce, in the heart of a hostile country, with an army weakened by famine, would have been perilous in the extreme. Fortunately for the Scots, however, the operations of the enemy were interrupted by dissensions amongst themselves; and, whilst they debated at Kilkenny, Bruce conducted his retreat with rapidity upon Cashel; from which, avoiding the English, he passed through Queen's County into Kildare, and, retreating from thence to Trim, in Meath, fell back upon Ulster, and once more re-established his communications with Scotland.[1]

During these transactions, the famine which raged throughout the country impelled his soldiers to commit excesses in plundering the convents, and polluting the churches and holy places with slaughter, which, in the miserable state to which they were reduced, the King found it impossible to restrain; whilst the picture presented in the Irish annals of the dreadful condition of the native population from war and hunger is almost too dreadful for description or belief. Their revenge proceeded to such a height, that it prompted them to tear to pieces, like wild beasts, the dead bodies of their enemies; and their misery from hunger became so dreadful, that, after spoiling the sepulchres of those recently interred, and devouring their remains, they are said to have murdered and eaten their own children. Convinced, at last, that it would be madness to pursue the project of the conquest of Ireland, Bruce, whose presence was required in his own dominions, made haste to

[1] Irish Annals, apud Camden's Britannia.

quit the country where, for the meed of a little barren glory, he had encountered the greatest misery and distress. Having left with his brother as many soldiers as he could spare out of the wreck of his army, he embarked, and returned to Scotland in the commencement of the autumn; whilst Edward Bruce, with his characteristic ardour and courage, remained in Ulster, fully resolved to maintain by the sword the precarious crown which he had won.

During Bruce's absence in Ireland, Douglas, and the Steward appear to have acquitted themselves of their charge with vigour. The English border lords, disgusted with the pusillanimity of their sovereign, who, after having appointed an army to assemble for the invasion of Scotland, had failed to meet his barons at the appointed time, concerted measures amongst themselves, and endeavoured, by various insulated attacks, to interrupt the tranquillity of the kingdom. The Earl of Arundel, along with Sir Thomas de Richemont, invaded the forest of Jedburgh, at the head of 10,000 men, but were repulsed by Douglas, who slew Richemont with his own hand. The same fate was experienced by Edmund de Cailou, a Gascon knight, to whom Edward had committed the government of Berwick; and an invasion by sea, in which an English fleet had entered the Forth, and effected a landing near Dunybristle, was rendered abortive by the bravery of Sinclair, bishop of Dunkeld; who, like many of the ecclesiastical order in those times had in his composition more of the warrior than the priest. Upbraiding those who had fled in a panic from the English on their first

descent, he put himself at the head of his vassals, threw his linen rochet over his armour, and, mounting his horse, charged the enemy, crying out to the fugitives that they were recreant knights, who deserved to have their gilt spurs hacked off their heels. "Turn with me," said he, "we shall soon drive them into the sea:" and the hardy churchman, who was a man of great strength and stature, performed his promise by a furious charge, which checked the invaders, and compelled them, with the loss of 500 men, to regain their ships, some of which were swamped in the confusion. When Bruce, on his return from Ireland, was informed of this spirited conduct, he broke out into expressions of delight declaring, that, from that time forward, Sinclair should be the King's Bishop; a name by which this warlike prelate was long afterwards known in Scotland.

Since the period of its having been sacked by Edward I., in 1296, the important city of Berwick, originally the property of Scotland, had been, at various periods, attacked and plundered by both parties. It was now in the possession of the English, and Bruce being determined, if possible, to recover it out of the hands of the enemy, with this purpose began to collect his military stores, to construct his warlike machines, and to concentrate his army: but these preparations were interrupted by an event which displayed the firmness and political judgment of the King in a favourable light. It appears that Edward II., despairing of any success against his rival in Scotland by temporal warfare, determined to interest

the Pope in his favour, and try the effect of those spiritual thunders which had sometimes proved more terrible than the sword. The character of John XXII. facilitated this attempt. By a papal bull, which he issued from Avignon, in the month of January, 1317, he commanded a truce of two years to be observed between the hostile countries; but manifested an evident partiality, by addressing Bruce as his son, "carrying himself as King of Scotland." In addition to this indignity, he secretly intrusted to the cardinal legates, whom he despatched into Britain, a bull, by which Bruce and his brother, in the event of their making any opposition to his desires, were declared excommunicated persons.

Of all this the Scottish King received early information; and, justly incensed at an illegal attempt to deprive him of his rights and to lower him in the eyes of his people, he determined, without openly breaking with the court of Rome, to inflict a punishment upon its emissaries, which should render it more difficult for the Holy See, in time to come, to procure executioners of its tyrannical decrees. It happened that the cardinal legates arrived in England at the conjuncture when Louis de Beaumont was about to be consecrated bishop of Durham; an installation which, in those days of ecclesiastical wealth and ambition, was generally attended with a vast display of pomp and magnificence. When the cardinals, therefore, despatched their two nuncios, the Bishop of Corbeil and Master Aumery, into Scotland, for the purpose of delivering the papal letters to the King, and having along with them also the bulls

of excommunication, these envoys determined to visit Durham on their road, and attend the ceremony of Beaumont's inauguration. They accordingly joined the suite of the Bishop elect, and proceeded on their journey towards the borders, with a splendid cavalcade of prelates, knights, and ecclesiastical attendants. It has been already mentioned that the border counties were, at this time, in a state of great disorder, owing to the lawless conduct of those bands of fierce soldiers who, associated at first for the purpose of defending the country and repelling the Scots, had, like the free companies in France and Italy, thrown off all allegiance to their government, and become transformed into banditti, who were ready to engage in whatever service promised them the highest plunder. With these dangerous neighbours Bruce, whose warlike character impressed them with respect, had contrived to keep up a sort of friendly intelligence; and he now secretly employed two of their leaders, named Middleton and Selby, to possess themselves of the letters, the obnoxious bulls, and the private instructions, which the papal emissaries carried along with them. It may be easily believed, from the character and habits of the border freebooters, that they did not execute their commission by halves. When, accordingly, the cavalcade had advanced to Rushyford, between Woodham and Ferryhill, a party of horsemen, commanded by Selby and Middleton, made their appearance from a wood hard by the road; and, charging the prelates and their party, made prisoners of Henry Beaumont and his brother, the

Bishop elect, dispersed and routed their convoy, and, seizing the papal nuncios, soon tore off their gorgeous apparel, robbed them of their trunks and baggage, but cautiously abstained from wounding or offering violence to their persons. They then despatched a party to convey Beaumont and his brother to Mitford Castle; and presenting the nuncios with two horses, took leave of them with expressions of affected humility and reverence, and wished them a prosperous journey into Scotland.[1]

On arriving at court, the nuncios were admitted into the King's presence, and even received with courtesy; but when they requested Bruce to grant a personal interview to the cardinal legates who were intrusted with the commands of his Holiness, he steadily refused. "No one," said he, "can be more desirous than I am for a permament peace between the two countries; but so long as I am only addressed as Governor of Scotland, and my kingly title withheld from me, I will not admit the legates, nor suffer the sealed letters which are thus addressed to be opened. Amongst my subjects there are others who bear my name of Robert Bruce, and share in the government of my kingdom. These letters, I am bound to believe, are addressed to them, and not to me. All my subjects call me King. I have been crowned King; I am in possession of the kingdom. I am invariably addressed as King by other sovereigns and royal persons.

[1] Leland, Collectanea, vol. i. p. 335. Anglia Sacra, p. 750. Hutcheson's History of Durham, vol. i. p. 267.

If, as you say, our holy mother, the Church, is not in the habit of prejudging any controversy during its dependence, why doth she prejudice my right by withholding from me the royal title of which she finds me in possession, and bestowing it upon my rival? Had you ventured to deliver letters so directed to any other crowned head, I doubt not but you would have been somewhat more harshly treated. But although I will neither open your letters, nor admit your masters, the cardinal legates, to an interview, yet I respect you as messengers of the Holy See, for which I entertain all due reverence. The envoys then in vain requested that Bruce would command a temporary suspension of hostilities; and having been dismissed from the royal presence, returned in haste and dismay to their masters, the cardinals, in England.[1]

These dignitaries, however, had not travelled from Avignon to be so easily baffled in their mission; and they determined, at all hazards, to make a resolute effort to proclaim the papal truce within Scotland. For this purpose they selected Friar Adam Newton, the father guardian of the Minorites of Berwick, and delivered to him the papal bulls and instruments, besides the letters which had been so unceremoniously returned, with directions to repair to the presence of the King of Scotland, to whom he was to deliver these documents; after which he was to have an interview upon the same subject with the Bishop of St. Andrew's, and the other Scottish prelates. The fate of Newton, however, was still more

[1] Rymer, Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 661, 662.

severe than that of the nuncios: and yet he took every precaution to insure his safety. Aware that Bruce had secret intelligence of his motions, he left the papal bulls and letters at Berwick; determining, that until he had procured letters of safe conduct, he would not travel with such dangerous commodities upon his person. At this time Bruce, having assembled his army for the siege of Berwick, had advanced within twelve miles of that city; and on arriving at the camp, which was situated in a wood near Old Cambus, Friar Newton found the King busily engaged in the construction of warlike engines for the attack of the town. On his application to Lord Alexander Seton, the seneschal, a safe conduct was readily granted, and the envoy returned for the bulls and letters to Berwick. The moment, however, that these obnoxious documents were connected with his person, they seemed to operate like a fatal charm in bringing upon their possessor every possible indignity. On returning to the encampment at Old Cambus, he was refused admittance into the royal presence, but compelled to deliver up his letters. On observing that they were not addressed to him as King of Scotland, Bruce returned them to the unfortunate envoy unopened, and with many expressions of contempt; declaring, at the same time, that he was resolved to make himself master of Berwick; upon which the friar, surrounded by the Scottish barons, and in presence of a great crowd of spectators, had the audacity to proclaim the papal truce between the two kingdoms, which was received with so general a burst of indignation and

derision, that Newton, to use his own expressions, began to have "much terror, and compunctious consultations how he should escape out of the hands of the enemy with the safety of his letters and of his life." In this disconsolate condition, he conjured them, if they had any bowels of charity, and entertained any reverence for the Holy See, to procure from the King a safe conduct back to Berwick, which was peremptorily refused. He then besought them to permit him, in execution of his mission to the Scottish prelates, to proceed on his way into Scotland, which was still more rudely denied; and he was commanded to leave the encampment, and get out of the kingdom as speedily as possible. That which the emissary had dreaded now took place: on his way back to Berwick, four armed banditti broke out upon him in a lonely part of the road, robbed him of the fatal papal letters and bulls, stripped him to his shirt, and, without offering any further violence, left him in this sorry plight to pursue his journey. "It is rumoured," says he in an interesting account of the whole transaction, preserved in an original paper addressed to the cardinal legates, "that the Lord Robert Bruce and his accomplices, by whose agency these things were done, is in possession of the letters of his Holiness, which were intrusted to me. What they may do with them I know not: but what ought to be done against such contumacious rebels and despisers of the commands of the Apostolic See your discretion will better point out than my poor capacity determine. Yet I conclude by declaring before God, that even now

I am as ready as I have been hitherto to labour to the utmost of my power for the furtherance of your business." The ecclesiastical devotedness of Friar Adam was not, however, any further taxed; and the cardinal legates, repulsed in their repeated efforts to deliver the papal letters by the firmness of Bruce, and the facility with which, whilst he professed all possible reverence for the Church, he contrived to defeat her designs, renounced in despair the object of their journey; and, after having vented their wrath against the King and his adherents, by publishing in England the sentence of excommunication against them, they returned baffled and disappointed to the papal court.

The army now advanced against Berwick, the only city from the Red Swyre on the borders, to the Orkneys, which had not by this time been recovered out of the hands of the enemy. Its strength, which had been lately increased by a thorough repair of the walls, and the construction of new defences, was equal to its importance; and its castle, situated within the town, was considered as almost impregnable. Bruce, however, determined to strain every effort to make himself master of the place, hoping to conclude the long war in which he had been engaged by a success which would be as useful in its consequences upon the wealth and commerce of the kingdom as it would be glorious to the army and to himself. Nor was it long before a circumstance occurred which was as favourable as could be desired for the accomplishment of his purpose. The population of Berwick, owing to its having

been anciently a Scottish town, and long in the possession of that country, was of a mixed character; and amongst the citizens were many men of Scottish extraction, and connected with that country. These had been disgusted by the over-severity of Horsley, the English Governor; and one of them, named Spalding, having privately sought one of the Scottish officers, offered, on the night when he had the command of the watch at a particular part of the walls, to facilitate the entrance of the enemy. The officer, dreading to undertake so important an enterprise on his own responsibility, went straight to the King, who received him joyfully. "You did well," said he, "to impart the proposal to me: had you gone to Douglas you would have displeased Randolph; and had you made Randolph your confidant, it might have disgusted Douglas: but it is in my own hands now, and both shall assist you in the enterprise." All was accordingly organised under the direction of Bruce. On the night pointed out by Spalding, the Scots under these two eminent leaders rendezvoused in Duns Paill; and, without interruption or discovery, planted their ladders, scaled the walls, and, after a desperate resistance on the part of the citizens, who were assisted by a sally from the castle, the assailants made themselves masters of the town. The King then advanced at the head of the rest of the army; and the castle, after a siege of five days, was delivered into the hands of the Scots.

When the arms of Bruce had reduced this important frontier town, he determined to pursue a policy different from that which he had hitherto

adopted on similar occasions. Hitherto, when any town or fortress fell into his hands, he had almost invariably dismantled or destroyed them; but the strength and importance of Berwick as a point of defence on the borders, the large sums which England had expended so lately in completing its fortifications, and its value as a great commercial emporium, determined him to garrison it, and keep it in its present condition, although aware that so soon as an English army could be assembled, Edward would probably concentrate his strength to recover it. Having carefully, therefore, inspected the whole works, he committed the government of the town and castle to his son-in-law, Walter the Stewart, and, with the assistance of Crab, a Flemish engineer of great experience, not only completely repaired the fortifications, but provided it with those warlike machines which were then employed in the defence and attack of towns. At different intervals upon the walls he planted his springalds, cranes, catapults, and those huge machines for discharging iron darts or propelling stones, which were then denominated *balistæ de turmo;* and having provided an ample supply of provisions and military stores, he left under the command of the Stewart a select garrison, composed of spearmen, archers, and crossbowmen; and, advancing with his army into England, stormed the castles of Wark and Harbottle, burnt the towns of Northallerton, Boroughbridge, and Scarborough, and found the country so utterly dispirited and defenceless, that, to use the expression of an English contemporary chronicle, they returned into Scot-

land, driving their prisoners like flocks of sheep before them.[1]

The joy occasioned by the capture of Berwick, and the brilliant termination of the campaign by Bruce was considerably clouded by the disastrous accounts which soon after arrived from Ireland, regarding the death of Edward Bruce, and the total defeat of his little army. This sudden and melancholy termination of an enterprise, from the first too romantic and hazardous to promise any satisfactory result, appears to have been accelerated by the imperious and headstrong temper of the chief who had planned and conducted it. A long period of inaction had succeeded the departure of Bruce from the seat of war; and the dissensions amongst the Irish chiefs, who at first pretended to be in alliance with the Scots, with the grievous ravages of famine and disease, had thinned the numbers of the army, and depressed the spirits of the soldiers to such a degree, that, on the appearance of an English force in the neighbourhood of Edward Bruce's encampment, which exceeded his army by almost ten to one, the Scottish leaders, as well as the Irish auxiliaries, earnestly dissuaded him from engaging in action. But their efforts were completely in vain. It was the misfortune of this ardent leader that his feelings as a knight, animated by the high-wrought principles of chivalry, and his love of personal renown, exercised an influence on his mind paramount to all considerations of policy, and all calculations of the chances of success. On the present occasion, although the Irish po-

[1] Chron. of Lanercost, apud Tyrrel, p. 272.

sitively refused to sacrifice their lives in so desperate a contest, and retreated to a neighbouring eminence, from which they might watch the result, the Scottish leaders, with only 2000 men, resolved to give battle to the English army, amounting to nearly 40,000 excellent troops, under the command of Lord John Bermingham, an able and experienced soldier. The consequence was a complete victory on the side of the English, which was attended with a great slaughter of their enemies. Sir John Stewart, a brother of the Stewart of Scotland, Sir John Soulis, Sir Philip Mowbray, and many other brave and veteran officers, were slain; whilst a small remnant of the wreck of the army, under the command of John Thompson, leader of the men of Carrick, made good their retreat to Carrickfergus, whence they embarked for Scotland, and carried into that country the melancholy intelligence of their discomfiture. Edward Bruce was slain in an early part of the battle; and the Irish annals inform us that he fell by the hand of John Maupas, who was found dead also, and stretched upon the body of his enemy. It is certain that the English leaders, with a spirit very dissimilar to the generosity of Bruce's behaviour after the battle of Bannockburn, mangled and divided the body into four quarters, and preserved the head in salt, to be sent as an appropriate present to the King of England, who, for his services on this occasion, created Lord Bermingham Earl of Louth.[1] *According, however, to the account given by Barbour, who, there is every reason to believe,*

[1] Irish Annals, apud Camden.

received his information relative to the Irish campaign from those present, the body thus ignominiously treated was that of Gib, or Gilbert Harper, the same brave and stout yeoman belonging to Edward's household whose intrepidity saved the army at Carrickfergus. By a practice not unfrequent in these times, this devoted servant wore the armour and surcoat of his lord on the day of battle, whilst Edward Bruce himself was clothed in a plain suit, which bore no ornaments indicative of his high birth and royalty.[1] In consequence of this, says the chronicler, they were misled by the beautiful and splendid armour and coat armorial; and when they found Harper, cut off his head, and had it pickled in a little kit or barrel, believing firmly that it was the body of Sir Edward Bruce.

Thus, by the death of its fiery leader, and the total dispersion of his army, concluded an expedition which forms a singular episode in the history of Scotland. It is evident that Bruce, with that excellent judgment, which was not to be dazzled by glory into the prosecution of a hopeless enterprise, had abandoned all idea of the conquest of Ireland, from the period of his retreat to Carrickfergus and departure for Scotland, in 1317. His kingdom was still engaged in a war which, although it had already fixed the national liberty upon a permanent basis, was yet unconcluded, and required for its support all the strength of the country; so that conscious of the impossibility of recruiting the army in Ireland, when once persuaded by personal observation of the indisposition

[1] Barbour, p. 364.

of the native Irish to the cause, it at once became desperate in his eyes, and it ought undoubtedly to have appeared in the same light to his brother. But the renunciation of a crown which he had won by his valour, so long as he possessed even the wreck of his army, was not to be expected from the bold and determined character of Edward Bruce. Had he been contented to have watched his opportunities—to have delayed till the arrival of reinforcements—to have allowed the English to exhaust and weaken their strength by the factions which had risen up amongst them—to have given time to the Irish to combine their forces, and settle their feuds amongst each other—a more favourable result might have been anticipated, although, under all circumstances, the enterprise was full of difficulty and danger. But the fatal termination was hurried on by the reckless and headstrong temper of its chief, whose talents for war were of the highest order, had they not been weakened and disturbed in their exercise by those storms of passionate wilfulness and overweening confidence in himself which had already disturbed the government of his brother; and which, it is probable, softened, both to his brother the King and to the nation, the regret occasioned by his untimely fate.[1]

His death, in the mean time, rendered some new measures necessary with regard to the succession to the crown; and, in a parliament which met at Scone, in December, it was solemnly provided, that, in the event of the King's decease without heirs male of his body, Robert, the son

[1] Fordun, book xiii. c. 13. vol. ii. p. 290.

of the Princess Marjory, and of Walter the high Stewart of Scotland, should succeed to the crown; with the additional proviso that, in case this succession opened to Robert Stewart, or any other heir of the King's body, during his minority, Randolph, Earl of Moray and Lord of Man, and, failing him, Sir James of Douglas, should be tutor to the young King, and Regent, until it appeared to the majority of the community of the kingdom that the monarch was of a fit age to assume the management of the state.[1] A most important clause was added in the same act, regarding the general principles which, in all time coming, ought to regulate the succession to the crown; by which it was declared that, unlike the practice which was followed in inferior fees, the throne should belong to the male nearest to the King in the direct line of descent at the time of his death; failing him, to the female nearest in the direct line; and, failing the whole direct line, to the nearest male heir in the collateral line, respect being always paid to the right of blood by which the deceased king reigned.

In the same parliament, the liberties and immunities of the national Church were strongly asserted; peremptory orders were issued that all men should, according to their condition, array themselves for war; every man possessed of land which brought an annual rent equal to ten pounds value of moveable property—a sum equal to about 150*l.* modern money—was to provide himself with an acton, or padded leather jacket, and a steel basnet, or helmet, besides gloves of plate, and a

[1] Fordun, book xiii. p. 290.

sword and spear: others, whose income was inferior, were commanded to furnish an iron jack, forming a back and breast plate, an iron headpiece, or knapiskay, and gloves of plate. These gloves of plate were strong leather gauntlets, reaching nearly to the elbow, and defended on the outside by steel plates sewed on and overlapping each other like the scales on a lobster. Descending lower still, every man who possessed the value of a cow was enjoined to arm himself with a bow and a sheaf of twenty-four arrows, or with a spear.[1] When the army was summoned on active service by the King's writ, it was strictly commanded that the various knights and barons who owed military service should provide themselves with carriages and provisions, or with money sufficient to purchase them, that the farmers and labourers might not be robbed or oppressed by the troops in their passage through the country. Notwithstanding the brilliant success which had crowned the arms of Bruce, and his incessant labours for the welfare and prosperity of the country, certain traitorous individuals, probably of high rank, but whose names have not been preserved, had busied themselves in vilifying the government, and spreading rumours which were calculated to destroy the confidence between the King and his people. It was enacted, therefore, in terms which, in later times, unfortunately left room for a dangerous latitude of interpretation, that no person should invent or propagate rumours by which matter of discord might arise between the King and his people, under the penalty

[1] Cartulary of Abedvor., Lib. p.283.

of being imprisoned till the King's pleasure should be made known.

Unable to cope with the Scottish army in the field, Edward endeavoured, by other methods, to counteract the efforts and destroy the commercial prosperity of the Scots. By his interest at the Papal court, he procured the sentence of excommunication against the Scottish King and his adherents to be promulgated by the two cardinals who still remained in England; whilst the Scottish commissioners, who had been despatched by Bruce to the court at Avignon, complaining of the injustice of such spiritual thunders, were committed to prison by the time-serving and obsequious pontiff.[1] In addition to this, he directed letters to the Count of Flanders, the Duke of Brabant, and the magistrates of the various commercial towns in the Netherlands, with whose dominions the Scots carried on a flourishing trade, requesting them to renounce all intercourse with his enemies, who were in the practice of importing military stores, arms, and provisions, in exchange for the wools, hides, and other articles of Scottish produce. It appears that the Duke of Brabant and the town of Mechlin acquiesced in the wishes of the English monarch; but the Earl of Flanders made a remarkable reply: he observed, that his country was common to all men of every region, and the right of entering his ports free to every individual. He could not, he said, as it was beyond his power, prevent merchants from exercising their trade according to ancient custom; as it would occasion the utter

[1] Fœdera Angliæ, vol. iii. p. 759, 760, 761.

ruin of his dominions. In permitting the Scots to frequent his harbours, or allowing his subjects to carry on a trade with Scotland, it was not his wish, he declared, to encourage that nation in error, and participate in their crimes, but simply not to interfere with the free exercise of merchandise, on which the prosperity and very existence of his own subjects so necessarily depended.[1] The commercial prosperity of Scotland was thus little injured by the remonstrances of England; and Edward, not long after, with that capricious and inconsistent policy which marked his public conduct, offered peace to Bruce, and an indemnity for all past offences, provided he consented to acknowledge the paramount authority of the English crown. The Scottish monarch replied that he despised peace upon such degrading conditions; that the crown belonged to him as his hereditary right, which he had vindicated in a long and successful war; and that he neither owed, nor ever would acknowledge, allegiance to any earthly superior lord whatever.[2]

Stung by such an answer, the war was resumed by Edward with a vigour from which almost certain success was anticipated. The whole military strength of his dominions was called out: a powerful fleet was commanded to occupy the mouth of the Tweed, and to cooperate with the land army; a large subsidy was voted by Parliament to defray the expenses of the expedition; and so confident did the monarch feel regarding the result of these measures, that, after requesting the prayers of the Church

[1] Fœdera Angliæ, vol. iii. p. 770. [2] Malmesbury, p. 190.

in favour of the enterprise, he, in return for this demand upon their devotion, bestowed upon some favoured individuals the gifts of many prebendaries, livings, and other benefices in the country which he proposed to conquer.[1] Having completed his preparations, he put himself at the head of his army in the beginning of the month of September, 1319; and, having crossed the Tweed, sat down before Berwick, resolved to commence the campaign by making himself master of this city. But his utmost efforts failed to accomplish this object, although he commanded a force which enabled him completely to invest it from the river Tweed to the sea. In a little time, according to the vivid description given by the contemporary chronicler, there might be seen erected on the neighbouring fields a city of tents and pavilions, which covered a far greater extent of ground than the town and castle which was besieged; whilst on the side towards the sea, their fleet, which occupied the mouth of the river, was so numerous, that the view was intercepted by a forest of masts; and every endeavour to throw troops or supplies into the town rendered almost certain of failure. For six days the English attempted no assault, but employed themselves in casting up dikes or mounds of earth against the walls, from which they determined to fix their ladders and carry the fortifications by storm. Nor did it require these mounds to be of any great dimensions, as the walls of the town were at this time so low, that, to employ the illustration of Barbour, a man

[1] Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 785, 786.

standing below might, with his spear, strike one above in the face.[1] During the same interval, Walter the High Steward, to whom Bruce, as we have seen, had intrusted the keeping of the town, was employed day and night in mustering his force upon the ramparts, planting his engines, assigning their respective quarters of defence to his leaders, and personally inspecting every portion of the works, with the assistance of Crab, the Flemish engineer.

Considering the importance of Berwick, and the care and expense with which it had been fortified by the King, it was natural that any attempt against it should be viewed with much interest; and when it was known that the son-in-law of Bruce, — a young warrior, whose high rank was rendered more conspicuous by the services he had already rendered to the country, — had been selected as its Governor, and that the whole army of England, headed by King Edward, and under the command of the flower of the nobility, had invested it by sea and land, the intense interest with which the siege was watched by both countries may be easily imagined. It concluded, however, in the complete triumph of the Steward, and the repulse of the English army; yet not before every device then known in the rude engineering of the times had been essayed by the besiegers, and effectually baffled by the ingenuity and persevering courage of the enemy. After their earthen mounds had been completed, the English, on St. Mary's eve, made a simultaneous assault both by land and by sea. Whilst their

1 Barbour, p. 344.

force, led by the bravest of their captains, and carrying with them, besides their usual offensive arms, the ladders, crows, pick-axes, and other assistances for an escalade, rushed onwards to the walls with the sound of their trumpets, and the display of innumerable banners, a large vessel, prepared for the purpose, was towed towards the town from the mouth of the river. She was filled with armed soldiers, a party of whom were placed in her boat drawn up mid-mast high; whilst to the bow of the boat was fixed a species of drawbridge, which it was intended to drop upon the wall, and thus afford a passage from the vessel into the town. Yet these complicated preparations failed of success, although seconded by the greatest gallantry; and the English, after being baffled in every attempt to fix their ladders and maintain themselves upon the walls, were compelled to retire, leaving their vessel to be burnt by the Scots, who slew many of her crew, and made prisoner the engineer who superintended and directed the attack.

This unsuccessful attack was, after five days' active preparation, followed by another still more desperate, in which the besiegers made use of a huge machine moving upon wheels, and including several platforms or stages, which held various parties of armed soldiers, who were defended by a strong roofing of boards and hides, beneath which they could work their battering-rams with impunity. To co-operate with this unwieldy and bulky instrument, which, from its shape and covering, they called a "sow," moveable scaffolds had been constructed, of such a height as to

overtop the walls, from which they proposed to storm the town; and, instead of a single vessel, as on the former occasion, a squadron of ships, with their top castles manned by picked bodies of archers, and their armed boats slung mast high, were ready to sail in with the tide, and anchor beneath the walls. Aware of these great preparations, the Scots, under the encouragement and direction of their governor, laboured incessantly to be in a situation to render them unavailing. By Crab, the Flemish engineer, machines similar to the Roman catapult, moving on wheels, and of enormous strength and dimensions, were constructed and placed on the walls at the spot where it was expected the sow would make his approach. In addition to this, they fixed a crane upon the rampart, armed with iron chains and grappling hooks, and large masses of combustibles and fire-faggots, shaped like tuns, and composed of pitch and flax, bound strongly together with tar ropes, were piled up in readiness for the attack. At different intervals on the walls were fixed the espringalds for the discharge of their heavy darts, which carried on their barbed points little bundles of flaming tow dipped in oil or sulphur; the ramparts were lined by the archers, spearmen, and crossbows; and to each leader was assigned a certain station, to which he could repair on a moment's warning.

Having inspected his whole works, the Steward cheerfully and confidently awaited the attack; to which the English moved forward in great strength, and led by the King in person, on the 13th of September. Irritated by their late re-

pulse, and animated by the presence of their nobility, the different squadrons rushed forward with an impetuosity which at first defied all efforts to repel them; so that the ladders were fixed, the ditch filled up by fascines, and the ramparts attacked with an impetuous valour which promised to carry all before it. But the Scots, who knew their own strength, allowed this ebullition of gallantry to expend itself; and, after a short interval advanced with levelled spears in close array, and with a weight and resolution which effectually checked the enemy. Considerable ground, however, had been gained in the first assault; and the battle was maintained, from sunrise till noon, with excessive obstinacy on both sides; but it at last concluded in favour of the resolution and endurance of the Scots, who repulsed the enemy on every quarter, and cleared their ramparts of their assailants. At this moment, by Edward's orders, the sow began its advance towards the walls; and the cran, or catapult, armed with a mass of rock, was seen straining its timbers, and taking its aim against the approaching monster. On the first discharge the stone flew far beyond; and, as its conductors hurried forward the immense machine, the second missile fell short of it. A third block of granite was now got ready, and an English engineer who had been taken prisoner was commanded, on pain of death, to direct the aim; whilst the sow was moving forward with a rapidity which in a few seconds must have brought it to the foot of the walls. All gazed on for an instant in breathless suspense,— but only for an instant. The catapult was dis-

charged, — a loud booming noise in the air accompanied the progress of its deadly projectile, — and, in a moment afterwards, a tremendous crash, mingled with the shrieks of the victims and the shouts of the soldiers from the walls, declared the destruction of the huge machine. It had been hit so truly, that the stone passed through the roofs, shivering its timbers into a thousand pieces; and crushing and mangling in a frightful manner the unhappy soldiers who manned its different platforms. As those amongst them who escaped rushed out from its broken fragments, the Scottish soldiers, imitating the witticism of black Agnis at the siege of Dunbar, shouted out that the English sow had farrowed. Crab now cast his chains and grappling-hooks over the ruins of the machine, and, dragging it nearer the walls, poured down his combustibles in such quantity, that it was soon consumed to ashes. The complete failure in this land attack seems to have cast a damp over the naval operations; and, although the ships attempted to move on to the walls at flood-tide, they were driven back without difficulty; whilst a last effort to enter the city by burning the gate of St. Mary's was repulsed by the Steward in person. It was now near nightfall; and, foiled on every side, the English entirely withdrew from the assault.[1]

In the mean time, Bruce, having heard of the first attack upon Berwick, collected an army of 15,000 men; and, placing it under the command of Douglas and Randolph, — whose very names, connected as they had become with frequent

1 Barbour, p. 345.

victory and uncommon military talent, struck dismay into the hearts of the northern population of England,—he commanded them to break across the border, with the purpose of compelling Edward to raise the siege of Berwick. It was the daring plan of the Scottish leaders, by a rapid march into the heart of Yorkshire, to surprise and seize the English Queen, who kept her court in that city during the siege; and, with this rich prize in their hands, to dictate to the English monarch the terms of peace. Such was the silent rapidity of their advance, that they were on the very point of succeeding; but an unforeseen casualty placed a Scottish prisoner in the hands of the English, who revealed the plan to the enemy; and, on reaching York, they had the mortification to find the prey escaped, and the court removed to a securer distance. Disappointed in this great object, Douglas and Randolph enforced the orders of the King, by laying the district as far as Rippon under the severest military execution. At this moment the whole of the regular military force of the country was with the King before Berwick; but the Archbishop of York, William de Melton, having collected the remains of those ecclesiastical vassals who had escaped the muster, along with a large but undisciplined body of men, of all ranks and descriptions, marched with nearly 20,000 of these motley troops towards Mitton, where the Scots had pitched their encampment on the little river Swale, which ran between the two armies, and could be crossed only by a narrow bridge. As the English force approached this strong position,

resembling, upon a smaller scale, the ground occupied by Wallace previous to the battle of Stirling, their enemies, who commanded a regular and well-disciplined force, were astonished at the appearance of their columns, which, from the multitudes of priests and dignitaries of the Church, with their white surplices and rochets thrown over their armour, the sacred banners waving above their shaved crowns, and the psalms and litanies which they chanted, resembled more a religious procession engaged in some sacred pilgrimage, than an army marching to battle. Besides these, the Mayor of York was in the field with his trained bands, and several tumultuous squadrons of yeomen, labourers, and camp-followers, armed with pikes, scythes, knives fixed to poles, and such weapons as they had hastily laid their hands on, commanded by a few veteran officers, whose age had exempted them from attending the siege of Berwick, but whose exertions were utterly unequal to introduce into the disorderly mass any thing like discipline or obedience. The consequnce of so ill-organised a force having the hardihood to attack such experienced officers as Randolph and Douglas was precisely what might have been anticipated. Upon their near approach to the river, these leaders set fire to a collection of hay-stacks and wet straw which had been piled up in a field in front; and, whilst a cloud of dense smoke concealed their operations from the enemy, who passed the bridge in much confusion, a large portion of the army of the Scots occupied the *tête de pont*, and, charging the English in the flank and rear, whilst they

were met with equal determination in front, obtained an easy but a very sanguinary victory. In a short time 4000 of the army of the Archbishop were slain; the sacred standards wont to be used in the offices and fêtes of the Church were trampled under foot, and defiled with blood; and around them lay the bodies of 300 priests, pierced with numerous wounds, and whose zeal and courage deserved a better fate. Multitudes, also, were drowned in the Swale; and, had not night interrupted the pursuit, it is probable that the whole army would have been put to the sword.[1] From the pitiable slaughter of ecclesiastics which took place in this battle, it was denominated, in the savage pleasantry of the times, the "Chapter of Mitton."[1]

The news of this defeat reached the leaguer before Berwick almost immediately after the failure of the second attack, and in the midst of preparations for a third attempt. The presence, however, of Randolph and Douglas, at the head of 15,000 men, in the heart of Yorkshire, and the entire dispersion of the only force which had attempted to make head against them, threw such a damp over the spirits of the English, that the Earl of Lancaster, becoming disgusted with the repeated failures, drew off his forces from the siege; and as these composed nearly a third part of his army, Edward, with the remainder, was compelled to abandon the siege. He made an attempt, however, by a rapid march across the country, to intercept the Scottish leaders upon

[1] J. de Trokelowe, p. 45. Leland, Collect. vol. i. pp. 474. 550.

their retreat; but they became secretly informed of his design, and, altering their line of march, entirely eluded it, arriving in their own country with a great booty, the extent of which may be estimated by an authentic document in the Tower, in which it appears that eighty-four towns and villages were exempted from payment of taxes on account of their having been burnt and pillaged by the Scots during the continuance of this expedition.[1]

The intelligence of the raising of the siege of Berwick was received by Bruce with the highest satisfaction; and, without losing a moment, he repaired thither in person, and returned thanks to the Steward and the garrison who had so nobly redeemed the important pledge which had been committed to them. He then inspected the fortifications; and, summoning from the adjacent country the most experienced masons and artificers, added ten feet of height to the whole circuit of the walls, and repaired the damage which had been committed during the siege. Soon after his return from these necessary duties, the English monarch, disgusted at the ill success of his arms, and suspicious of the fidelity of his brother, the Earl of Lancaster, despatched commissioners to open a negotiation for peace; and Bruce, whose health was now much broken, and who at this moment had begun to dread that a secret party was forming against his government, being equally anxious for a cessation of hostilities, consented to a truce between the kingdoms for two years. These suspicions of the King proved

[1] Fœdera, vol. iii. pp. 801, 802.

unfortunately, to be too well founded; and a conspiracy of a very dark and mysterious description was discovered during the sitting of a Parliament which was held soon after at Aberbrothock.

Of this plot, which appears to have been organised at a period when the popularity of Bruce might have been expected to have reached its height, it is difficult, if not impossible, in the scanty information which remains, to discover the ramifications. The statute of the former Parliament, in 1318, against all who were guilty of spreading rumours having a tendency to alienate the affections of the people from the King, was evidently connected with its earliest appearance. We find, also, that an application was made by the King of England to the Pope, in the commencement of the year 1319, in which Edward informed his Holiness of his having secretly received information that many of the Scots, who had hitherto been rebels against his authority, were desirous to treat with him for their peace and pardon, and the recovery of his kingly favour; promising that they would employ their utmost efforts to promote the honour and interest of England, and thus to secure their own tranquillity and advantage. It seems extremely probable, that these persons, who were thus basely intriguing with Edward against their country, were the authors of the treasonable rumours against the King, and of the conspiracy which was now brought to light. Their names were, William de Soulis, seneschal or high butler of Scotland; Sir David de Brechin; five knights,—Sir Gilbert

de Malherbe, Sir Eustace de Maxwell, Sir John Logie, Sir Walter Berkeley, and Sir Patrick Graham; and three esquires, — Brown, Troupe, and Rattray. The intentions of the conspirators were, to slay the King, whom they maintained had no title to the throne, and to place the crown on the head of Soulis, a direct descendant of Alexander II., but through a daughter who was notoriously illegitimate.[1] It appears that they had weakly admitted to their confidence the Countess of Strathern, who revealed the plot, and, along with Soulis, escaped with a sentence of perpetual imprisonment. Brechin, whose repeated treasons against the kingdom and secret tampering with the English had been pardoned by Bruce till further indulgence would have been a crime, was executed—not without the deep commiseration of the people. They knew little of the selfish policy which had actuated his conduct, and only saw in the victim before them a noble baron who had fought in the Holy Land, and acquired the highest reputation for chivalry. Along with him, Malherbe, Logie, and Brown suffered the punishment of death: whilst Maxwell, Berkeley, Graham, and their associates, were tried before a jury and acquitted. It is evident that these proceedings, considering the daring nature of the plot, were conducted by Bruce with that strong leaning to the side of humanity which forms a pleasing feature in his character: yet, unaccustomed to such scenes, the nation deplored the cruel necessity; and the meeting of the estates in which the trials took

[1] Barbour, p. 380.

place, was long afterwards remembered in Scotland under the title of the Black Parliament.

The same meeting of the states was remarkable for a spirited remonstrance, or memorial, addressed to the Pope by the barons, freeholders, and whole community of Scotland; in which, naturally incensed at the injustice done to their sovereign by the recent publication of the sentence of excommunication, they complain of the injuries which had been inflicted upon them by the aggression of Edward I., and insist, in a style of manly independence very different from the servility of the addresses generally presented to the pontiff, on their determination to support to the death their valiant prince and king, Lord Robert Bruce, in that throne to which he was entitled by hereditary right, and which he had vindicated by his sword out of the hands of the enemy. "To him," say they, in a sentence which, for the spirit which it breathes, might have been spoken in the best ages of Roman liberty, "are we bound, both by his own merit and by the law of the land; and to him, as the preserver of our people and the guardian of our liberty, are we unanimously determined to adhere. And yet, should he desist from what he he has begun — should he show an inclination to subject us or our kingdom to the King or to the people of England,—then we declare that we will use our utmost effort to expel him from the throne, as our enemy, and the subverter of his own and our right; and we will choose another king to rule over us, who will be able to defend

us; for, as long as a hundred Scotsmen are left alive, we will never be subject to the dominion of England. It is not for glory, riches, or honour, that we fight, but for that liberty which no good and brave man will consent to lose but with his life." This memorable letter is dated from Aberbrothock, on the 6th of April, 1320, and it originally bore the seals of eight earls and thirty-one barons, with the consent of the freeholders and community of the nation, meaning the smaller barons, and the commissioners from the burghs.

Upon receiving this spirited remonstrance, a change appears to have taken place in the selfish and intricate policy of the court of Rome; and a bull was addressed to the English monarch, in which, after a vivid picture of the sin and horror of war,—contrasting the expense and manifold calamities which it entails upon a nation with the manifold blessings of peace,—he earnestly recommends a reconciliation between the kingdoms.[1] Encouraged by this manifestation of the decay of papal wrath, the Scottish King lost no time in despatching an embassy to the Holy See, earnestly requesting a repeal of the sentence of excommunication, and expressing his desire to be re-admitted as a repentant and devoted son into the bosom of the Church; but Edward, becoming aware of the correspondence, intercepted and detained the letters transmitted by the Pope to Bruce in reply to this embassy, and, with an effrontery equal to his meanness, vindicated his conduct on the ground that they contained expressions

[1] Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 856.

which he did not think it proper should be communicated to this person.[1]

It was not to be expected that the Scottish King should tamely endure so deep an insult; and although at this time a disease had begun to undermine his strength, contracted in consequence of the incessant fatigues and exposure during his long wars, yet the moment the truce was expired, his spirit showed itself to be unsubdued, and hostilities were resumed with increased animosity and vigour. Whilst Douglas invaded England, Randolph, whose talents as a statesman began to be as conspicuous as the genius he had shown for war, engaged in a correspondence with the Earl of Lancaster and his faction; who, in disgust at the conduct of the English King, had risen in rebellion, and proposed, with the assistance of the Scots, to make himself master of the throne. The defeat and execution of this baron, and the temporary triumph of the King, cheered him, indeed, with a brief gleam of success; but it promoted, at the same time, an arrogance and presumption which rapidly conducted Edward to his ruin. Unmoved by the total alienation of the affections of his people; refusing to receive the lesson which his repeated defeats in Scotland might ere this have taught him; he addressed a letter to the Pope, informing him, in a strain of great pretension and confidence, that, having put down the rebellion of Lancaster, he would listen to no remonstrance in favour of Bruce; that peace between the two kingdoms was an idea which he deprecated and despised; and that he was en-

[1] Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 884.

gaged in preparations for the invasion and complete reduction of Scotland. These formidable declarations terminated, like most of the measures of this weak and capricious monarch, in very small results. Yet he collected the whole strength of his dominions; and, during the delays and extensive preparations which preceeded the organisation of so large a force, the Scots, who were on the alert, broke across the border, and penetrated into Lancashire. This county, to use the expressions of Knighton, an English historian, "they completely laid waste, without experiencing the smallest loss or opposition, collecting an immense booty in gold, silver, bestial, ecclesiastical ornaments, bed-room furniture, and dining plate; and returning driving before them their trains of waggons, laden with the accumulated goods of the country, as slowly and securely as if they had been taking a journey."[1]

Hearing of these excesses, and with a vain hope of intercepting his enemy, Edward, in the month of August, advanced into Scotland; where Bruce, no longer necessitated, as at Bannockburn, to peril the success of the campaign upon the issue of a battle,—aware of the famine which then had begun to rage in England,—and anticipating that the supplies provided for so numerous a force would be scanty, determined to avoid any general engagement, and to starve his enemy into a speedy retreat. For this purpose he gave orders to remove beyond the Forth the whole animal and agricultural wealth of the country; whilst he himself encamped at Culross, in Fife, and

[1] Knighton.

awaited the moment when he could advantageously commence offensive operations. On advancing through the Lothians to the capital, the English found themselves surrounded on all sides by an absolute desert. No smoke rose from the deserted habitations; and the parties despatched on all sides to forage returned as empty as they set out. The sight even of an enemy would have been refreshing to men so situated, but this was denied; and after having waited in vain for the arrival of their fleet, which was detained by contrary winds, they were compelled to commence their retreat, having suffered grievously from famine and sickness, and without drawing their swords against any nobler antagonists than the feeble monks of Melrose, where they murdered the prior, despoiled the church of its holiest ornaments, and afterwards attempted to destroy it by fire. They then precipitately crossed the border, pursued by Douglas, who harassed their rear: and it was with much difficulty that Edward, after an expedition which had begun with such high hopes, could keep together an army, with which he occupied a strong position at Byland Abbey, in Yorkshire.

The Scottish army, led by the King in person, now lost not a moment in the pursuit; and Edward had scarcely time to issue a hasty order for the protection of the Marches, when he received intelligence that they had commenced the siege of Norham. Consoling himself with the idea that the strength of this fortress would keep them occupied for some time, the careless monarch abandoned himself to the society of the

Despencers, and imagined he was in perfect security, whilst a secret correspondence was carrying on between some of his leaders and the enemy. News now arrived that the Scots had retired from Norham: his fit of vanity and presumption once more returned upon the King, and he began to talk of the triumph of his arms, when he was startled by the report that the enemy were at hand. Edward laughed at the story, and pronounced it impossible, but, after a short interval of unbelief, the royal standard of Scotland, and the well-known banners of Randolph and Douglas, were seen waving at the foot of the elevated ground where his army was encamped.

The King, however, felt confident in the strength of his position. His army was drawn up along the ridge of a steep acclivity, accessible only by a single narrow and tortuous path. This it was absolutely necessary to force, and the enterprise was committed by Bruce to Douglas. This leader, whilst he collected his soldiers and advanced his banner, was joined by Randolph, his old companion and rival in arms, who had left the division which he commanded, and, in the chivalrous spirit of the time, came with four squires to share the enterprise. It would have failed, however, such was the courage of the English and the strength of the ground, but for a stratagem of Bruce, who, recollecting the lesson he had learnt at Cruachen-Ben, despatched the men of Argyle and the Isles to climb a rocky ridge at some distance, and gain the high ground on the flank of the enemy. This manœuvre they

accomplished with celerity; and the English, already wavering from the impetuosity of the attack in front, when they found themselves assailed by a fresh enemy in flank, abandoned the pass and the heights at the same instant, and gave way in utter confusion along the whole extent of their line.[1] So precipitate was the flight of Edward, that he was forced to leave his plate, equipage, and military chest, besides his privy seal and part of his regalia, to fall into the hands of the enemy, who plundered the encampment, made prisoners of many noble knights, and, pushing forward as far as Beverley, in the East Riding, compelled the inhabitants to purchase an immunity from attack by the advance of large sums of money. During this whole time, in which the Scottish King braved the enemy in the heart of his kingdom, so completely broken was the power of Edward, that after the battle of Byland Abbey it was found impossible to muster even the smallest force, and the Scots retired at their leisure and unmolested.

Peace now became imperiously necessary for England: the country was wasted by incessant invasion; its wealth was drained by the purchase of reiterated truces; the interruption of agriculture had occasioned, during the late years, a calamitous dearth, which at intervals amounted to a famine; and the nobility were either split into factions amongst themselves, or engaged in a secret correspondence with the Scots. Under such circumstances, Edward suffered himself to

[1] Barbour, pp. 378, 379.

be at last convinced that the only policy to be adopted was an immediate negotiation for a truce; and Bruce, who, although in the midst of success, was wisely anxious for peace, consented to nominate the Bishop of St. Andrew's, Randolph, and Sir John Monteith, to meet with commissioners from England, by whose efforts a fifteen years' truce was concluded, to endure till the 12th of June, 1336. The special articles agreed on need not be specified; but it is important to remark that Bruce, in his ratification of the treaty, styles himself King of Scotland, to which title Edward now quietly submitted.[1] Yet, although compelled in his civil negotiations to submit to that superiority upon the part of the Scottish monarch which had been won by the sword, he now secretly busied himself to widen the breach between Scotland and the papal court. By his emissaries to the Pope, he attempted to vilify the character both of the monarch and his people. He painted them as holding the censures of the church in contempt; as barbarous heretics, who, reckless of their sacred character, inflicted tortures upon priests; and earnestly requested his Holiness not only to publish once more the sentence of excommunication against Robert Bruce, but to refuse his sanction for the election of Scotsmen to the episcopal office, on the ground that they encouraged the nobility and the people in their obstinate rebellion.[2]

To counteract such representations, and to obtain the removal of a sentence under which

[1] Fœdera, vol. iii. p. 1031.
[2] Fœdera, vol. iv. pp. 32. 34.

it was impossible, in these days of superstition for even the strongest mind to remain without some sentiments of dread, Bruce determined to send a solemn embassy to Rome, preparatory to which he despatched Randolph to pave the way, and discover the private feelings of the pontiff. It was fortunate for the success of this negotiation, that, before the arrival of the Earl of Moray, intelligence of the truce had been received at Rome; and the knowledge which this able diplomatist had obtained of the secret wishes of the Pope enabled him to bring forward his proposals with such artful moderation and apparent candour, that he disarmed the suspicions with which the Pontiff was inclined to receive any propositions coming from an excommunicated person, and prevailed upon him, as the only mode of promoting a lasting peace, to bestow upon Bruce that title of King which he had hitherto withheld. Considering the delicate nature of this negotiation, in which Randolph, the principal mover, was himself an excommunicated person, and the sovereign for whom he acted under the severest sentence of the church, it is difficult to praise too highly the skill with which it was conducted.

To crown this success, which was hailed with much satisfaction by the nation, the Queen of Scotland was delivered of a son on the 5th of March, 1324, who was christened David, after David I., a name, even after the lapse of a hundred and seventy years, still dear to the people.

The ambassadors, for whose negotiations Randolph had prepared so fair an opening, now pro-

ceeded to Rome; and had the Scots been willing to have given up the city of Berwick, the Pope showed every inclination to restore them to the bosom of the church; but the sacrifice demanded was too costly, and the proposal was unanimously rejected. The situation of England, however, rendered it impossible that any long interval should elapse without an effort to procure peace; and the Earl of Moray, along with Lamberton, Bishop of St. Andrew's, was empowered by Bruce to meet the Despencers, who then held the supreme rule in Edward's councils, at York, in order to negotiate upon this subject; but the conferences broke off without leading to any favourable result. The demands of the Scots were too high for the pride of their adversary. They insisted, as a preliminary to any pacification, on the absolute renunciation of the claim of superiority in the English crown over their ancient kingdom; upon the delivery of all that rich and extensive territory which had been held by David I., and on retaining Berwick: they proposed a marriage between the prince of Scotland and a daughter of the English monarch; and they demanded the restoration of the fatal stone of Scone, the palladium, as it was then believed, of Celtic Scotland. To such sacrifices Edward would not consent; and a treaty of alliance, which was soon after concluded between France and Scotland, rendered it unlikely that any renewal of the negotiations should be contemplated, whilst the recal of Edward Baliol, the only son of the late King, from his seclusion

in France to the English court, could not fail to rouse the jealousy of Bruce, and cause him to suspect the sincerity of Edward in his professed anxiety for peace.

The health of the King of Scotland was now entirely broken; and whilst of late every succeeding year had brought to him new glory, and established on a firmer basis that independence which it had been the great occupation of his life to conquer for his people, a severe and incurable disease was gradually, but surely, undermining his strength. His mind, however, was as vigorous as ever; and, in an anxiety to guard against any doubts or disturbances which might arise after his death regarding the succession to the throne, a parliament was held at Cambuskenneth, in which the clergy, earls, barons, and other nobility of Scotland, with the commissioners of the burghs, forming the body of the people, took the oaths of fealty and homage to David, the King's son, and his issue, engaging to receive and support him as the successor to the crown; whom failing, to Robert Stewart, only child of the late Princess Marjory, the King's daughter.[1]

It is of importance to notice, that this is the earliest Scottish parliament in which there is certain intimation of the appearance of the representatives of the cities and burghs as forming the third estate in the great national council.

Soon after this, the High Steward of Scotland was cut off, by the illness of a few days, at Bathgate. At the time of his death he had not completed his twenty-sixth year; yet such were the

[1] Fordun, b. xiii. c. 12. p. 287.

excellence of his judgment and his abilities in war, that his death was felt by the King and by the people as a public loss.

The whole nation, says Barbour, were thrown into lamentation, for, of his years, none was more worthy; and the tears of knights and ladies were not spared to bewail him.[1]

At this time happened that remarkable revolution in England, which deprived Edward II. of his kingdom and his life, and placed his son, Edward III., then only in his fourteenth year, upon the throne. One of the first acts of the new government was to ratify the truce with Scotland, and renew the negotiations for peace; yet, from the manner in which these proceedings were conducted, there appears to have been a studied intention of insulting the Scottish monarch, whose name was entirely omitted in the instructions to the English commissioners; whilst permission was given to "treat with the messengers of the noblemen and great barons of Scotland upon a final peace between the kingdoms." Bruce, on this insult, assembled a formidable army upon the borders, and declared his resolution of disregarding the truce, and immediately invading England. Against this design the preparations of the youthful monarch, or rather of Mortimer and the Queen, into whose hands the government had fallen, were conducted on a great scale. The whole military force of the

[1] Barbour, p. 386. "He was interred with great solemnity in the abbey of the Black Monks at Paisley, the common cemetery of the noble family of Stewart previous to their attaining the throne." — Keith's Catal. p. 252.

kingdom, under the command of the Duke of Norfolk, Marshal of England, assembled at Newcastle. Two fleets, under the names of the Eastern and Western Fleets, were commanded to rendezvous at Skimburness;[1] after which they were to proceed against the enemy. The inhabitants of the northern shires, and the brave and hardy borderers, were ordered to send their wives, female servants, and children, along with their flocks, herds, furniture, and movable riches, to remote places of strength and security, and themselves to be ready to meet the King and proceed with his army against the enemy. Soon after this, Edward, with the Queen-mother and the rest of the court, arrived at York, accompanied by John of Hainault, and a splendid body of Flemish horse, clothed, both men and horses, in complete steel. These were soon after joined by John of Quatremars, another foreign mercenary of veteran experience, who commanded a similar force; and, as accounts soon reached the camp that the Scots had passed the border and begun their ravages in the northern counties, the whole army, with the young King at its head, surrounded by his ablest officers and the flower of his nobility, advanced on the road to Durham.

It was Bruce's original intention to have conducted this expedition in person; but he was seized, when on the point of setting out, with one of those severe fits of sickness which, for the the time, totally incapacitated him for exertion. The command was therefore intrusted to Douglas and Randolph; and the history of the invasion,

[1] Rotuli Scotiæ, vol. i. p. 228.

as it is given by Froissart, with a freshness and minuteness which brings the whole vividly before the eye, evinces, in a striking manner, the skill and judgment with which these veteran commanders defeated the efforts of the English. According to this author, the English army consisted of sixty-two thousand men, including eight thousand knights and squires, admirably armed, and mounted on barbed horses; fifteen thousand lighter cavalry, who rode hackneys; fifteen thousand infantry, armed with spears, and twenty-four thousand archers. Against this noble body of warriors the Scots could muster only three thousand knights and squires armed cap-a-pie, and riding horses not inferior in strength to the English, with a body of twenty thousand light armed cavalry, mounted on hardy little hackneys, accustomed in their own land to live out in all weather, and to find support in the most barren country, where the high bred horses of England and Flanders would die of want.

The English force was not only unwieldy from its numbers, but encumbered with wagons, camp-equipage, sutlers, grooms, and the splendid pavilions, tents, and attendants which accompany a royal army. Their enemies, on the other hand, had little else than themselves, their arms, and their horses to attend to. "These Scottish men," says Froissart, "are right hardy, through sore travelling in harness and in war. When they enter into England, within a day and a night they will drive their whole host twenty-four miles; for they are all on horseback, except a few *traundals* and laggers who follow a foot. The knights and

squires are well horsed, and the common people and other on little hackneys and geldings; and they carry with them no carts or chariots, on account of the rugged and unequal ground which they have to pass through in the country of Northumberland. Neither do they take with them any purveyance of bread or wine; for their usage and soberness is such, in time of war, that they subsist in the expedition a great long time upon flesh half sodden, without bread; and for their drink, the river water without wine; neither care they for pots or pans. for they seeth the flesh of the beasts in their own skins. They are ever sure to find plenty of cattle in the countries where they pass through; and they carry with them, therefore, no purveyance for the field but a little bag of oatmeal trussed behind the saddle, and a broad thin plate of iron fixed between it and the crupper. The use of which is, that after they have eaten of their sodden flesh, then they lay this plate on the fire, and temper with water a little of the oatmeal, and when the plate is hot they cast the thin paste thereon, and so make a little cake in the shape of a crakenill, or biscuit, and this they eat to comfort their stomach withall: so that they are able to make greater marches than other soldiers." [1]

As Edward had stationed Norfolk at Newcastle, and the Lords Hufford and Mowbray, with considerable forces, at Carlisle, it was confidently expected that the Scots would be encountered in their attempts to penetrate into England, and that some check must be given them, so as to

[1] Froissart, translated by Lord Berners, vol. i. p. 18.

prevent their crossing the Tyne till the main body of the English army reached Newcastle. Yet with such silence and celerity had they conducted their operations, that their whole force had crossed the river without being perceived by the garrisons either of Newcastle or Carlisle; and, whilst Edward's light cavalry attempted in vain to acquire some intelligence of the line of their march, the smoke, which rose in thick volumes on the horizon, was the first certain messenger of their near vicinity and destructive progress. These melancholy beacons, however, were perpetually changing their position; and the English army, eager to meet the enemy, successively, but in vain, pursued. If they overtook one fire, they found nothing but blackened fields and blazing houses. Again another dusky column would arise in the distance, and announce that the work of destruction was elsewhere going rapidly forward, whilst it seemed impossible to discover the invisible agents by whose activity it was carried on. For three toilsome days did the host of England shape their course by these gloomy fires, enduring great extremities of fatigue and privation; exhausted by the rugged and desert paths through which they had to drag their horses and carriages; weary with watching; cast down by the recurrence of disappointment, and the conviction that they were engaged in a species of warfare to which their habits and the organisation of their army were totally unfitted, against an enemy who made it almost a pastime. At last, after they had been compelled to leave behind them the greatest part of

their heavy baggage, the resolution was taken to fall back upon the Tyne; and, having recrossed the river, to await, in a strong position, the return of the Scots, and intercept their retreat into their own country. This they accomplished with difficulty, owing to the swollen state of the river, and the round and slippery stones of which the bed was full at the spot where the cavalry forded.

Meanwhile, they were surrounded by every species of discomfort. The small allowance of bread which each soldier carried with him, had been soaked and rendered unpalatable by rain. The green wood which they cut with their swords, for the pioneers had lost their hatchets and axes, would not kindle; and at nightfall the greater part of the army were left in total darkness, as all the light they had proceeded from a few torches which the servants of the great lords had brought along with them. In this condition they were forced to lie in their armour on the bare ground, with their horses at their side and their hands upon the bridle, longing for the morning, which they trusted would bring them some intelligence of their enemies. It certainly proves that the military judgment of the leaders of this army was little to be relied on, when we understand, from Froissart, that they took up this position upon the Tyne under the expectation that the Scottish force would return by the same ford as that which they had crossed in their advance. Nothing could be farther from the intentions of that active and experienced enemy.

At last, after remaining for eight days encamped on the Tyne, the river continuing so much swollen with rain that the infantry had not been able to cross, the patience of the young King was exhausted; and, having issued a proclamation, promising knighthood and a grant of land to any one who would bring him certain intelligence of the Scots, he broke up his encampment, and proceeded in the direction where they thought there was most chance of discovering the enemy. Nor were they very long of being gratified; for, after a little while, Thomas de Rokeby, a Yorkshire gentleman, who, with many others, had set off on the adventure, galloped up to the spot where Edward rode, surrounded by his principal nobles, and kneeling at his bridle, informed him he would straightway conduct him to his enemies, whom he had left but a short while before encamped at Blanchland, on the Derwent. He added that, after having discovered them, he ventured somewhat too near to reconnoitre, and being seized by one of their outposts, had been carried before Douglas and Randolph, who, on becoming acquainted with the object of his errand, courteously dismissed him without ransom, and bade him hasten to inform the English of their encampment; adding, that King Edward could not be more desirous of meeting them than they were of fighting with him.

This intelligence the King received with the utmost joy, and all was now bustle and ardent anticipation. Rokeby was knighted by Edward before the army, and a charter of lands worth

100*l.* a year given to him and his heirs for ever. The soldiers were ordered to take refreshment and prepare their arms; whilst the King and his leaders repaired to a neighbouring abbey, where they devoutly confessed themselves, in the expectation of immediately joining battle. The troops were then arranged under their respective banners, the vaward led by the Marshal, before whom rode their guide, the new-made knight, Sir Thomas Rokeby; and afterwards each division following through an unequal country full of hills and valleys; the whole army being drawn up in seven battles, or squadrons. In the meantime the leaders of the Scottish host, which, to use the words of Barbour, "had been employed busily all that day in harrying Cockdale from end to end," were informed by their outskirrers of the near approach of the enemy; and Douglas, having rode forward to reconnoitre, returned and informed the Earl of Moray of the great strength of their host. "It matters not," said Randolph, "we shall fight them were they still more numerous than you report them."—"Praise be to God," said Douglas, "that we have a leader who would not scruple to fight with twenty against sixty thousand; but, by St. Bride, it would be folly to fight at present when we may, in a little while, engage them with far more advantage."[1] During this conversation the first battle of the English made their appearance over the ridge of a high hill which was in front of the Scottish encampment, and immediately afterwards their seven divisions successively defiled over the summit, and, de-

[1] Barbour, p. 399.

scending in excellent order, took up their position directly opposite the Scottish host, which were then encamped on the north, or Scottish, side of the river Wear.

Nothing could have been better selected than the position occupied by their army. It was an elevated ridge, defended on both flanks by high rocks which it was impossible to turn, having in front a rapid river swollen by the late rains, and running with great force over a rocky uneven channel. On reconnoitring this ground, the English leaders pronounced it to be impregnable, and the King despatched a herald to carry his defiance to the Scottish chiefs, offering, if they were inclined to accept the challenge and risk a battle, to retire with his whole army for a certain space, and permit them unmolested to pass the river and arrange their army; or proposing that they should draw back themselves and suffer the English to ford it, leaving sufficient ground to form their line. Douglas and Randolph, however, were not to be taken in by this bravado. "Go back," said they, "and inform your master that it is not our custom to follow the counsel of our enemy. The King of England and his barons are not ignorant of the injuries which have been inflicted by us upon their kingdom. They have sought us—they have found us; and if they are displeased, let them now chastise us as they best can, for here we mean to remain so long as suits our convenience."[1] And so, says the delightful historian of chivalry, "as soon as the King of England heard that answer, it was incontinently

1. Froissart, vol. i. p. 23.

proclaimed that all the host should lodge there that night, which they did with much pain on the hard ground, and in their full armour, for they had neither branches nor stakes to picket their horses, nor forage for the weary beasts, nor fire-wood for their own comfort. And when they were thus lodged, the Scots caused some of their soldiers to remain in their ranks where they had first drawn up their force, and dismissed the rest to their lodgings on the hill-side, where they made such great fires that it was marvellous to behold; and the day and night also they raised such a terrible noise and shouting, with the blowing of innumerable horns, all sounding at once, that it seemed properly that all the devils in hell had been encamped on the hill. Thus these two hosts were lodged that night, which was St. Peter's night, in the beginning of the month of August."[1]

In the morning, Edward ordered the whole of the cavalry to be dismounted, and the knights and squires to pull off their spurs and act as infantry, after which the army was again drawn up in order of battle; and the King, leading them forward to the banks of the river, endeavoured once more to provoke the Scots to leave their position. But, although they quickly arranged their hosts and displayed their banners, nothing but a few individual skirmishes took place; and the day having passed without either army breaking their array, night brought to the English the same discomfort and impatience, and to their enemies the same security and satisfaction. In

[1] Froissart, vol. i. p. 23.

the Scottish camp every thing seemed cheerful, joyous, and abundant; whilst the English nobility and knights, the rich and pampered cavalry of John of Hainault, and the yeomanry and archers, accustomed to the good fare of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, were almost famished for want, and overpowered by weariness and watching. Such was their condition for a few days, during which the two armies faced each other, when an event occurred which convinced the English of the superiority which their enemy possessed in their perfect acquaintance with the country: the third day had been passed in some trifling skirmishes between the young knights and squires of both armies, and the third night had left the two hosts encamped, as usual, in sight of each other, the Scottish fires blazing, the horns winding to call in their stragglers, and the shouts of mirth and good cheer coming from their encampment. In the morning, to the surprise of the English, their whole army had disappeared, and, instead of the blaze of arms and the waving of penons, nothing was to be seen but a bare hill-side, covered with the embers of expiring fires, and the relics of a deserted camp. It was soon found that the leaders of their host, having discovered a position which they deemed more favourable, had decamped silently during the night, and drawn up their army in a wood called Stanhope Park, about two miles from their late encampment, and situated nearly at an equal distance from the river Wear. "Here," says Froissart, "our scouts found them encamped on another mountain, more strong than the first,

by the river also, and there was a great wood on one side by which they might go and come secretly when they listed."[1]

To this second position, still more unassailable than the first, the English moved forward, encamping on the other side of the Wear, directly opposite; but their ignorance of the country led them to select their ground with much remissness; and Douglas, on the second night after their arrival, in a daring attack, had nearly put an end to the campaign by the death or captivity of the young King. "At the head of two hundred men at arms, this leader," says Froissart, "past the river at a distance from the host, and suddenly broke into the English encampment, shouting 'Douglas! Douglas! Ye shall all die, ye thieves of England;' and he slew or seized 300 men, some in their beds, and some scantly ready, after which, putting spurs to his horse, he came to the royal pavilion, always crying 'Douglas!' and cutting asunder the cords, would have carried off the young monarch. The royal household, however, headed by the King's chaplain, made a gallant resistance; and, as the whole army was by this time roused, Douglas was soon surrounded by innumerable assailants. The adventure now began to look serious; and the Scottish leader, sounding his horn, collected his soldiers in a compact body, and cut his way, with great difficulty, back to the river. It was a species of attack to which the good Sir James, during the long course of his military life, had been not unfrequently accustomed; and his manner, if repulsed,

[1] Froissart, vol. i. p. 24.

was usually to throw himself into the rear with some of the stoutest of his soldiers, and keep the enemy in check, whilst the principal body of his troops made a rapid retreat. This was the method which he now adopted; and his men, in the meanwhile, by their lord's orders, pressed on, through the darkness, to the river, but, on reaching it, their congratulations at the escape they had made were clouded by missing their leader. His well-known horn, however, was heard soon after; and it appeared, on his rejoining his soldiers, that he had been met and encountered by a yeoman of great strength, armed with a club, who made so desperate an attack upon him that he had been placed in jeopardy of his life. He, however, slew his opponent, and regained the camp. Randolph immediately joined him, and eagerly enquired what speed he had made? 'We have drawn blood,' said Douglas, 'but little more.'"[1]

This desperate attack had so nearly succeeded, that it caused the English to redouble their watchfulness, and to stand to their arms day and night. In this manner the armies remained opposed to each other for nearly twenty days; the English and their foreign auxiliaries enduring the extremities of cold, hunger, and perpetual fatigue with the utmost patience and gallantry, but unable either to discover an access to the Scottish camp, or to induce their enemies to leave the mountain. At last the meal and the forage began to fail amongst the Scots, though they had still abundance of cattle; and a consultation was

[1] Barbour, p. 399.

held by the leaders upon the best mode of proceeding, word having previously arrived from Scotland that King Robert had despatched a reinforcement of 10,000 men, under the command of the Earl of Dunbar, to relieve his army, which was encamped in Stanhope Park.

It is singular that, upon this occasion, Randolph, who was commonly reputed a more cool and judicious soldier than Douglas, earnestly proposed to risk a battle; whilst this impetuous leader as strongly dissuaded him from it. In Douglas's character, however, there was a striking union of boldness in action with a love of stratagem and a sagacious calculation of means; and, in the present instance, convinced that no measures which they could adopt would give them the slightest chance of success against an enemy which outnumbered their army by nearly 50,000 men, he proposed a retreat, with the object of uniting their forces with those sent by the King, and afterwards continuing the campaign. This project, however, was not without difficulty and hazard, as the retreat lay through an extensive morass in the rear of the army, which, from its being impassable to cavalry, had effectually defended it from attack. The same circumstance, however, which had proved the security of the host during its encampment, now rendered its retreat through the soft and boggy waste, intersected with quagmires and water-courses, exceedingly perilous. But the success with which the proposal of Douglas was accomplished reflected credit on the military skill of this veteran leader. "Follow my counsel,"

said he to Randolph, "and you shall be led over the moor without the loss of a camp-boy." [1] Orders were accordingly issued throughout the host for the soldiers to pack up their goods and chattels in the smallest possible compass, and to be ready to march on a moment's warning. At the same time a quantity of hurdles, made of wooden frames filled up by a wattling, or basket-work, of green boughs, were prepared, to be carried along with them, whilst the camp presented to the enemy the same appearances as before. At this time, whether by accident or design is not certain, a Scottish knight fell into the hands of the English, and being carried prisoner to their camp, and severely threatened, he confessed, that the army were in great distress for want of provisions, so that it would be almost impossible for them to hold out much longer against the enemy. He added, that on this very evening orders had been issued for every man to hold himself in readiness to follow the banner of the Lord Douglas, but it was unknown against what quarter the expedition was intended. By this information, the English were misled into the idea that Douglas would assuredly make an assault upon the camp during the night; and, after having held a council of his leaders, the King made preparations to receive them, lighting great fires and keeping every man under arms.

Meanwhile, in the Scottish camp the beacons before the tents blazed as brightly as before, and the noise of an army in preparation — the shouting of the soldiers with the constant blowing of

[1] Barbour, p. 401.

the horns — confirmed the English in the idea that they were about to be attacked. At midnight all was silent: the Scots mounted their hackneys, and drew quietly off from their encampment, leaving its fires burning. On reaching the morass, Douglas's promise to Randolph was faithfully performed; the hurdles were thrown down upon the softer places of the bog; the water-runs and quagmires were passed in safety; care was taken to carry off the hurdles so as to prevent pursuit; and in a few hours the retreating army had thrown between the English and themselves a barrier now impassable, but over which they had marched without the loss of a page or a camp-boy.

Towards daybreak, the English, who had in vain expected an attack, were astonished at the entire disappearance of the enemy; but immediately afterwards two trumpeters were brought in by the advanced pickets, who informed them that the Scottish army was by this time five miles on their way homewards. So loath were they to believe this, that they still continued under arms till broad day; and having then sent their scouts across the river, who found the camp entirely deserted, they at last were permitted by their leaders to disarm, which they did with a feeling of mortification and disappointment proportionable to the high excitement in which they had passed the night. The Scottish camp presented an extraordinary spectacle. In it were found the carcasses of five hundred cattle recently slain, the Scots having found it impossible to drive

them off: besides this, there were three hundred caldrons made of beasts' skins strained on fixed stakes, and filled with flesh and water ready to be sodden; near them were more than a thousand spits with meat on them ready to be roasted; and on the ground they picked up ten thousand pairs of shoes made of raw leather, with the hair still on them; an article of manufacture still known in the highlands of Scotland under the name of brogues. It presents us with a mortifying picture of the savage policy of war, and throws a cloud on the vaunted stainlessness of chivalry, that five English prisoners were found in the camp of Douglas and Randolph, stripped naked, and tied to trees, with their legs broken; a cruel expedient adopted to prevent their giving information to their countrymen.

On consulting with his officers, it was determined by Edward, that any attempt at pursuit would be absurd; but so deeply mortified was the youthful monarch, that, on seeing his army dispersing, he is said to have burst into tears. Such was that early love of glory which was afterwards destined to be satiated with the conquest of France, and to cost his own kingdom so much blood and treasure. In the mean time the Scots repassed the Tyne, and rapidly regained their own country, enriched with booty, and with the credit of having completely outmanœuvred an enemy their superior both in force and equipment. Such was the conclusion of the last great military expedition during the reign of Bruce, in which the veteran experience of

Douglas and Randolph, and the patient discipline of the Scottish army, are highly to be commended.

On their return home, the King, whose health was now so far recovered as to be able to mount on horseback, assembled the whole force of his dominions; and passing the eastern borders, sat down with part of his army before Norham Castle; whilst a second division swept through Northumberland, and a third portion, commanded by Douglas, laid siege to Alnwick. The English ministers, however, were well aware of the miserable consequences which were likely to result from the country being again exposed to the complicated calamities of invasion; and scarcely had the siege of Norham commenced before commissioners from Edward III. repaired to the Scottish camp, bringing a request for peace, and proposals of a marriage between David Bruce's only son and Johanna, the sister of the English monarch. To this King Robert replied, that, as the basis on which all negotiations for peace must proceed, he required from Edward a solemn renunciation of all claim of feudal superiority over Scotland. To give their consent to this was beyond the power of the commissioners; and the Parliament of England assembled on the 1st of March, 1328, to deliberate upon the subject.

At length this important preliminary, which, during a war of twenty years had been debated by both nations with so much haughtiness and animosity, was satisfactorily adjusted. Bruce was unreservedly, and without any equivocation,

acknowledged as King of a separate and independent kingdom. In the instrument of renunciation it was declared by Edward, that himself and his predecessors, kings of England, had endeavoured to obtain a right of dominion and superiority over Scotland, by which long and grievous wars had arisen between the two kingdoms. That, being desirous for the establishment of a firm and perpetual peace, he now, by the consent of his Parliament, did grant for himself and his heirs, that the kingdom of Scotland should remain for ever to the magnificent Prince and Lord Robert, by the grace of God the illustrious King of Scots, his ally and dear friend, and to his heirs and successors, free, entire, unmolested, and separated from the kingdom of England by its ancient marches and boundaries, as in the time of Alexander, King of Scots, last deceased; without any subjection, servitude, claim, or demand whatsoever.

The great obstacle to their deliberations being thus removed, it required little time to settle the final treaty, and peace was concluded at Edinburgh on the 17th of March, 1327, and confirmed in a parliament at Northampton on the 4th of May, 1328. The articles agreed on were certainly honourable for Scotland; but a nation which, under many and grievous reverses, had for nearly thirty years been engaged in a perpetual struggle for their liberty were entitled to insist on no ordinary conditions of restitution and security. Nor were these by any means so ignomi-

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 289. Rymer, Fœdera, vol iv. p. 337.

nious as the English writers, misled by their zeal and nationality, have sometimes described them. A marriage was agreed on between Prince David of Scotland and the Princess Johanna, sister to Edward III.; and it was stipulated that the two kings should for ever remain true and faithful allies to each other: all letters, charters, agreements, or treaties relative to the subjection which the kings of England had attempted to establish over Scotland were to be instantly abrogated and delivered up; and Edward engaged to use his utmost endeavour to procure, from the court of Rome, the recall of the processes of excommunication. Bruce, on his side, consented to pay to England, within three years, the sum of 20,000 merks; and it was stipulated that the stone of Scone, upon which the Scottish kings were wont to be anointed at their coronation, and which was regarded by both nations with feelings of superstitious reverence, should be immediately restored to the country. Such were the principal articles in the treaty of Northampton.[1]

When made public in England, it was received throughout the country with deep feelings of dissatisfaction: Isabella, the Queen-mother, and her favourite, Mortimer, were accused of having sacrificed the dignity and independence of the nation; and when the renunciation of the superiority was proclaimed, and the fatal stone of Scone was about to be removed, the populace in London rose in a body, and violently detained that emblem of the conquest of Edward I., replacing it in Westminster Abbey. The mar-

[1] Robertson's Index to the Charters, p. 101, &c.

riage, however, between the Prince of Scotland and Johanna, the sister of the English King, took place at Berwick on the 12th of July, 1328, in presence of Edward III. and King Robert, accompanied by a brilliant court of the assembled nobility of both kingdoms, amongst whom were the Queen-mother of England, her favourite, Mortimer, and the Earl of Ulster, the near relation of the Scottish monarch. Immediately after the nuptials, Bruce, along with the Earls of Ulster, Monteith, and others of his nobility, repaired to Ireland, for the purpose of concluding a separate peace between the various and discordant parties into which that island was divided and his own kingdom; after which he returned to Scotland, upon the feast of the Assumption.[1]

It is an affecting circumstance, that the King of Scotland had scarcely concluded this peace, which proved so signal a blessing to the nation, and brought so happy a relief to his own cares and anxieties, when that disease, contracted amidst the hardships and exposures of war, which had of late years been undermining his strength, assumed a more malignant form, and rendered it necessary for him to abstract himself entirely from public business. By the advice of his physicians, he retired to Cardross, a beautiful retreat, situated upon the Clyde, about six miles from Dumbarton; where, amid the intervals from pain and sickness, his time appears to have been much occupied in

[1] Ayloffe's Calendars of Ancient Charters, p. 58. Introduction. — Chron. Lanercost, MS. Brit Mus. f. 222—325. New Series. Annales Hiberniæ, apud Camden, p. 20.

making experiments in the construction and sailing of vessels, with a view, probably, towards the establishment of a more effective naval force in Scotland. We learn this fact from the accounts of his high chamberlain, which are yet preserved; and the same records acquaint us, that in these kingly amusements he often enjoyed the society of Randolph. His lighter pleasures consisted in hunting and hawking, when his health permitted; in sailing upon the Clyde, and superintending his mariners and shipwrights in their occupations; in enlarging and enclosing his park, and making additions to his palace. As even the most trivial circumstances are interesting when they regard so eminent a man, it may be mentioned that he kept a lion, the expense of whose maintenance forms an item in the chamberlain's accounts; and that his active mind, even under the pressure of increasing disease, seems to have taken an interest in the labours of the architects, painters, goldsmiths, and inferior artists who bebelonged to his establishment. In compliance with the manners of the times, he maintained a fool, for whose comfort he was solicitous, and in whose society he took delight. He entertained his clergy and his barons, who visited him from time to time at his rural palace, in a style of noble and abundant hospitality. The minutest parts of his expenditure appear to have been arranged with the greatest order; and his lowest officers and servants, his huntsmen, falconers, dog-keepers, gardeners, and park-stewards, provided for in rude but regular abundance. His gifts and

largesses to the officers of his household, to his nurse and other old servants, and to the most favourite amongst his nobles, were frequent and ample: his charity in the support of many indigent persons, by small annual salaries or regular allowances of meat and flour, was extensive and well-directed; whilst a pleasing view of his generosity, combined with his love of letters, is presented by his presents to "poor clerks," for the purpose of enabling them to carry on their education "at the schools.' [1]

Amidst these quiet but not unkingly cares, the near approach of death was contemplated with resignation and deep expressions of repentance for the sins he had committed, and the blood which he had spilt. In compliance with the regal practice of the age, more than from any feelings of ostentation, which was foreign to the simplicity of his character, he had given orders to have a magnificent tomb made at Paris, which was brought to Bruges, thence through England into Scotland, and, on its arrival, erected in the church of the Benedictines, at Dumfermline.[2] About a month before his death he appears to have conceived an especial affection for the monks of Melrose: and he directed a letter to his son and successor, Prince David, in which he recommends these religious men and their monastery to his care and protection with great earnestness and solicitude. He had determined also, that, at this time, his heart should be buried

[1] Chamberlain's Accounts.

[2] Barbour, p. 415. Chamberlain's Accounts, vol. I. pp. 98. 101.

at Melrose, although his body was to be carried to Dumfermline.[1]

Soon after this, Bruce's illness assumed an appearance which proved that its last stage could not be distant, and his principal clergy and nobles, with affectionate solicitude, repaired to Cardross. At this moment that repentance for the profuse expenditure of blood during his long wars, which he had already expressed, induced him to alter his wishes for the interment of his heart at Melrose, and to resolve, with the superstitious feeling of the age, that it should be carried to Jerusalem, to be deposited in the church of the Holy Sepulchre, since the unworthy body it had animated could no longer obey its wishes and engage in war against the Infidels. The manner in which this request was made to his friend and companion in arms, Sir James Douglas, is thus beautifully and affectingly described by Froissart, with a minuteness which sanctions the belief that he received his information from some of the knights or prelates who were present. "Meanwhile," says he, "King Robert of Scotland became sore oppressed with age and weakness, being grievously afflicted with the great sickness, so that there remained no way with him but death. And when he felt that his end drew near, he sent for those barons and lords of his realm, in whose loyalty he had the greatest confidence, and affectionately enjoined them, on their

[1] The epistle in which this appears has lately been discovered; and, as the last letter of this great man, is a very interesting relic. It will be found printed, for the first time, at the end of the life.

fealty, that they should faithfully keep his kingdom for David his son, promising to obey him, and place the crown upon his head when he attained the full age: after which he beckoned that brave and gentle knight, Sir James Douglas, to come near, and thus addressed him, in presence of the rest of his courtiers: 'Sir James,—My dear friend — Few know better than yourself the great toil and suffering which, in my day, I have undergone for the maintenance of the rights of this kingdom; and when all went hardest against me, I made a vow which it now deeply grieves me not to have accomplished. I then vowed to God, that if it was his sovereign pleasure to permit me to see an end of my wars, and to establish me in peace and security in the government of this realm, I would then proceed in person to the Holy Land, and carry on war against the enemies of my Lord and Saviour to the best and utmost of my power. Never hath my heart ceased to bend earnestly to this purpose; but it hath pleased our Lord to deny me my wishes, for I have had my hands full in my days, and at the last you see me taken with this grievous sickness, so that I have nothing to do but to die. Since, therefore, this poor frail body cannot go thither and accomplish that which my heart hath so much desired, I have resolved to send my heart there in place of my body to fulfil my vow; and because in my whole kingdom I know not any knight more hardy than yourself, or more thoroughly furnished with all those knightly qualities requisite for the accomplishment of this vow, it is my earnest request to thee, my beloved and

tried friend, that, for the love you bear me, you will, instead of myself, undertake this voyage, and acquit my soul of its debt to my Saviour; for, believe me, I hold this opinion of your truth and nobleness, that, whatever you once undertake, you will not rest till you successfully accomplish; and thus shall I die in peace, if you will do all that I shall enjoin you. It is my desire, then, that so soon as I am dead, you take the heart out of my body and cause it to be embalmed, and spare not to take as much of my treasure as appears sufficient to defray the expenses of your journey, both for yourself and your companions; and that you carry my heart along with you, and deposit it in the Holy Sepulchre of our Lord, since this poor body cannot go thither. And I do moreover command, that in the course of your journey you keep up that royal state and maintenance, both for yourself and your companions, that, into whatever lands or cities you may come, all may know you have in charge to bear beyond seas the heart of King Robert of Scotland.' At these words all who stood by began to weep; and when Sir James himself was able to reply, he said, 'Ah, most gentle and noble King, a thousand times do I thank you for the great honour you have done me in permitting me to be the keeper and bearer of so great and precious a treasure. Most willingly, and, to the best of my power, most faithfully, shall I obey your commands, although I do truly think myself little worthy to achieve so high an enterprise.'—'My dear friend,' said the King, 'I heartily thank you, provided you pro-

mise to do my bidding on the word of a true and loyal knight.'—'Undoubtedly, my liege, I do promise so,' replied Douglas, 'by the faith which I owe to God and to the order to which I belong.'—'Now praise be to God,' said the King, 'I shall die in peace, since I am assured that the best and most valiant knight in my kingdom hath promised to achieve for me that which I myself never could accomplish:' and not long after," concludes Froissart, "this noble monarch departed this life."[1]

Immediately after his death, the intelligence of which was received with profound grief by the whole kingdom, his last directions were carried into effect with affectionate care. The heart was first extracted and embalmed; and the body, after having undergone the same operation, was enclosed in lead, then wrapt in a rich cloth of gold, and enclosed, finally, in a strong coffin of oak. After lying in state, it was transported, with great solemnity, from Cardross to Dumfermline. It was here received by the whole body of the prelates and nobles, and deposited in a small temporary chapel erected for the purpose, to which multitudes of the people crowded with deep and unaffected grief, to take their last look of him who had so faithfully spent his life in their service, and whom it had pleased God to make so wonderful an instrument for the securing to them and to their children the richest inheritance which a monarch can bestow upon his people — their freedom from a foreign yoke. The last services of the church were then performed; after which the coffin was lowered into

[1] Froissart, vol. i. p. 113. Buchon edition.

a vault, in the middle of the choir, opposite the high altar.

Robert Bruce died in his fifty-fifth year. By his first wife, Isabella, daughter of Donald, tenth Earl of Mar, he had an only daughter, Marjory, married to Walter, the High Steward; of which marriage was born Robert II. King of Scotland, and first of the royal house of Stewart, who succeeded to the crown in 1371. By his second wife, Elizabeth, daughter of Aymer de Burgh, Earl of Ulster, he had three children; David, who succeeded him, Mathildis, who made a marriage with an obscure person called Isaac[1], and Elizabeth, who became the wife of Sir Walter Oliphant, of Gask. In his person Bruce, in the prime of life, was upwards of six feet high, and possessed all those peculiarities in his physical structure, which are found united with great bodily strength. His shoulders were broad, and his chest full and open; the cheek bones strong and prominent, and the muscles of the back and neck of great size and thickness; his hair curled short and close over a full and expanded forehead; and the general expression of his countenance was that of great cheerfulness and equanimity.

Bred from his earliest youth in the court of Edward I., and cherishing the idea that he was born to a throne, his manners combined the finished courtesy of the gentle and accomplished knight with a becoming gravity and dignity. Such was his usual demeanour; but we learn from his interviews with the papal legates,

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 348.

that, on occasions when he was led to express displeasure, his countenance completely changed, and became so stern and kingly, that it at once ensured obedience and imposed silence: the contrast presented by his character previous to the murder of Comyn, and subsequently to that unfortunate and unjustifiable deed, is very striking: before it, although neither weak nor inconsistent, his life belongs to the common race of ambitious men; after it, there is no exaggeration in the expression, when it is pronounced to be in the strictest sense of the word heroic. His patience and indomitable perseverance amidst reverses which were heaped upon him till he was reduced to the lowest state of distress and desertion; the calm judgment with which, deriving experience from repeated defeat, he formed a system of military tactics adapted to the country which he defended, and the enemy against whom he fought; the talent with which he detected the genius and trained up to a maturity of excellence such officers as Randolph and Douglas, and the success with which he raised the spirit of his people to an ascendency over their enemy, which is acknowledged by the English historians, entitle him to this appellation. It is to be recollected also, that the memorable war which he maintained with resources the most limited, against a country infinitely his superior in fleets, in armies, and in money, was protracted throughout a period of twenty years, during all which time he concentrated the energies of his mind upon one great object, till at last it was gained and secured by a glorious peace. Nor is it to be forgotten, that,

although the sense of deep and almost intolerable injuries inflicted upon him in his dearest and tenderest relations might have afforded some excuse for a retaliation upon his enemies when placed within his power, he refused to obey the impulse, and listened to the more generous dictates of humanity; so that the splendour of Bruce's victories is not stained by a single act of cruelty or revenge.

Bruce, as we have seen, was buried in the Abbey Church of Dunfermline, in the middle of the choir, beneath a marble monument which had been prepared for him before his death. Ages passed on, and both church and monument having given way to time, a more modern building was erected on the ancient site. This, however, in our own day, became so much dilapidated, that it was judged necessary to take it down; and, in clearing the foundations for a third church, the workmen laid open a tomb, which was found to be that of Robert the Bruce. The leaden coating which enclosed the body was twisted above the head into the shape of a rude crown. A rich cloth of gold, in a state of great decay, was thrown over it; and on examining the skeleton, it was discovered that the breast bone had been sawn asunder, to extract the heart. There remained, therefore, no doubt that, after the lapse of nearly five centuries, the countrymen of Bruce were permitted, with a mixture of delight and awe, to behold the bones of their great deliverer.[1]

[1] The important discovery of the tomb of Robert Bruce is to be attributed to the zeal and ability with which Mr.

LAST LETTER OF ROBERT THE BRUCE.

Robert, by the grace of God, King of Scots, to David, his beloved son, and to his successors which shall come after him, wisheth safety, and such an obedience to his

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Burn, of Edinburgh, who gave the plans for the new Church, succeeded in tracing the walls of the first and most ancient edifice: he was thus enabled to ascertain the precise position of the choir, in the middle of which, from the evidence of Fordun, he knew that the body of Bruce had been deposited. The examination of the tomb and the body by the Barons of Exchequer, of which Sir Henry Jardine has drawn up an accurate report, did not take place till nearly a year after the tomb was first laid open; a circumstance to be much regretted, as the work of decomposition had in the interval proceeded rapidly. But the following very interesting letter contains an account of the first discovery. It was communicated to me by my friend Mr. Burn, whose talents have raised him to the highest rank in his profession.

" The great uncertainty which prevailed as to the precise situation of the royal tombs, and the total disappearance of every vestige of the old abbey, with the exception of the exterior walls of the north aisle, gave a peculiar interest to the operations I was called on to conduct, and led me very anxiously to investigate the extent and proportions of the ancient edifice, not only with a view to determine its connection with the existing building, but to establish, if possible, the accuracy of Fordun regarding the tomb of King Robert the Bruce.

" Previous to the commencement of the excavations for the new church, the whole space it occupies bore the general appearance of the churchyard, a considerable portion of it being used as burial ground, and the remainder covered with soil and grass. Proceeding, however, from the north aisle wall, I followed the foundations of the original building at a depth of from one to five feet under

precepts as may merit his blessing to rest on their future reigns. Dear son, you are aware that he alone is worthy to be called a son, who, in all just things imitating his

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the surface, and, in this manner, discovered the whole extent and form of the exterior walls, by which I was at once enabled to determine the centre line, and fix the position of the choir; and this done, all my anxiety was directed to the discoveries that might by made within the area of the old abbey.

"On the forenoon of the 17th of February, 1818, whilst I was engaged in directing the works, two labourers, employed in excavating and clearing out the soil and rubbish, called out to me that they certainly 'had come upon a stone coffin or tomb, as, when the point of their pick struck upon it, it sounded *boss*.'[1] Regarding for an instant the place they were at work,—perceiving it to be in the direct line of the centre of the building,—and having a full recollection of the historical evidences upon the subject of King Robert's interment,— I immediately proceeded to the spot, and, so soon as the upper stones were cleared and the appearance of the covering exhibited, I felt assured we had discovered either the tomb of the Bruce, or, at all events, that of a person of considerable distinction, from the circumstance of the stone being more carefully jointed and worked than any others we had met with in clearing out the foundations.

"The whole covering consisted of two strong flags, neatly hewn; that across the head 28½ inches wide, and 18 inches long, and the other 28½ inches wide, and 6 feet long; the latter being perfectly flat across the whole surface; but the former, or head-stone, at the east end, sloped gently upwards from each side towards the centre, forming an apex about ¾ of an inch above the level of the larger stone.

"Having now a full view of this tomb, I directed the head-stone to be carefully removed; and the instant a glance was obtained of the interior, all my doubts were satisfied, and my highest expectations realised, as, even from the partial view that was obtained, there was evidence

[1] Hollow.

father's example, endeavours, with his whole power, to obey his wishes; nor does he rightly merit the name of heir, who does not adhere to the salutary desires of his predecessor. Being desirous, therefore, that you and the rest of your successors should continue to entertain, with devout respect to our memory, that sincere love and pious affection, which, being moved thereto by their most holy life, we have concieved towards the monks and the monastery of Melrose,

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of royalty; and the form of a crown that was given to the lead covering over the head, and the sparkling fragments of gold which covered the surface, confirmed this highly important fact.

"The under stone was now removed, and then the entire figure was fully seen; the whole lead casing having evidently been covered over with cloth of gold, from the fragments that were found on every part, and the glittering particles still remaining on the surface. The lead at the toes was considerably decayed; and a spot on the forehead, about the size of a crown piece, had also been consumed; but in every other situation it appeared perfectly entire, and retained all the shape and roundness of form, which it must have originally possessed. And it may be worthy of remark, that the small exposed spot on the forehead at the opening of the tomb presented the appearance or colour of the skin, and exhibited a striking contrast to the decay that had taken place at the toes.

"Convinced beyond the possibility of doubt that this must be the body of King Robert, I had the stones immediately replaced, and the tomb secured against all further interference, and reported to the Barons of Exchequer on the subject.

"When the tomb was opened on the 5th November, 1819, a great change had taken place in the appearance of the body; the lead had completely fallen in over the abdomen, had suffered much from decay, and, in many places, exposed portions of the bones.

"Sir H. Jardine's report to the Barons of Exchequer gives all the other details, and I only, therefore, add a drawing of the tomb and body when first discovered."

in which, according to our special and devout injunctions, our heart is to be buried; and being the more earnest that this ardour of attachment should be shown by you to these holy men ofter our decease, in order that they may be thereby animated to pray more fervently and effectually for the welfare of our soul: we therefore direct you (and to this request add our most fervent supplications and injunctions), that you will permit the same holy men to enjoy liberally and without interruption the rents which we have assigned to them towards the rebuilding of their church, rather, if any change is made, adding to these gifts than subtracting from them, and at all times lending a benevolent ear to their supplications — defending them from their enemies, and all who may invade their rights. It is our wish, then, that you, my dear son, and others who may be our successors, shouid be anxious to retain in your mind these our exhortations and requests, along with the blessing of the Son of God, who taught sons to obey their parents, and declared of himself, that he came into the world, not to do his own will, but the will of his Father who is in heaven. In testimony, therefore, of the devotionwith which we are animated towards the religious house so highly esteemed and sincerely beloved by us, we have addressed the present letter to these holy men, to be shown hereafter to our successors. Given at Cardross, on the 11th of May, in the twenty-fourth year of our reign.[1]

[1] MS. in the Morton Collection, now printed for the first time.

JOHN BARBOUR.

BORN 1316.—DIED 1395.

The early literature of a nation in which the nobility could neither read nor write, and where there existed no public seminaries for the education of the people, was necessarily confined to the clergy; and this truth is not less verified by the literary history of Scotland, than of the other kingdoms of Europe. It is from the monastic institutions, from the schools attached to the convents and the various religious houses which were scattered over the face of the country, that the first feeble gleams of knowledge are seen emanating; and if, to guide the literary pilgrim through the dismal night of the middle ages, a single ray of science or of useful learning is seen to shoot athwart the gloom, it will be found to proceed from the quiet cell of some holy monk, who combined the offices of devotion with the pursuit of letters. It was unfortunate, however, that these clerical students generally preferred the Latin language, which they knew imperfectly, to their own native tongue, which was abandoned to the minstrels, story-tellers, and itinerant buffoons, who attended the courts of the nobility, mingled in the pastimes of the people, and embodied in their songs, ballads, and romantic legends, the manners and the superstitions of the age.

It is to the honour of John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, that he was the first Scottish author who renounced this fatal practice, and boldly constructed his lofty rhyme in the imperishable materials of his own native language.[1] Of his life, the united research of historians and antiquaries have failed to ascertain even the most common particulars. We know not who was his father; it is uncertain whether he was born in 1316, or some years later; and the place of his nativity and of his education is equally obscure, although, there is a presumption that he was educated at Arbroath. All that can now be pronounced with certainty regarding an author of undoubted genius, who, to use the words of Warton, has "adorned the English language by a strain of versification, expression, and poetical imagery far superior to his age[2]," is, that, after having studied in middle life at Oxford, and subsequently in France, he began the composition of his great work upon the Life of Bruce in 1375, under the reign of Robert II., from whom he received a pension, which expressly bears, that it was bestowed as a reward for the compiling the book of the deeds of Robert I."[3] From this period till the year 1395, when he died at an advanced age, his life is a perfect blank; and we search in vain, either in his own works or in the pages of original records, for any facts to supply the place of that conjectural biography in which

[1] We must except Thomas the Rhymer, the mysterious sage who is believed to have sung the story of Sir Tristrem.

[2] Hist. of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 318.

[3] Compot. Balliv. de Abirden, p. 269.

some of his critics have so amply indulged themselves.

From the discouraging uncertainties of Barbour's life we must now turn to his work; and here, whether we consider him as a historian or as a poet, he is entitled to high praise. His exordium explains his object in clear and forcible language:—

Stories to rede ar delitabill,
Suppose that thai be nought but fabill,
Then suld stories that suthfast[1] were,
An thai war said on gud maner,
Hawe doubill plesance in hearing.
The fyrst plesance is the carpyng,
And the tothir the suthfastnes[2],
That shews the thing rycht as it was,
And such thyngs that ar lykand,
Tyll manys hearing ar plesand;
Thairfor I wald fain set my will,
Giff[3] my wit myght suffice thairtill,
To put in wryt a suthfast story,
That it lest ay furth in memory,
Sa that na tyme of length it let,
Nor ger it haly[4] be forget:
For auld storys that men redys
Representes to thaim the dedys
Of stalwart folk that lywyt ar,
Rycht as thai than in presence war.
And certes thai suld weill have pryse
That in thair tyme were wycht and wyse,
And led thair lyf in gret travaill,
And oft in hard stour of battail
Wan rycht gret pryse of chewalry,
And war woydit[5] of cowardy.
As was King Robert of Scotland,
That hardy was of hart and hand,

[1] True. [2] Truth. [3] If. [4] Wholly.
[5] Devoid.

And gud Schyr James of Douglas,
That in hys tyme sa worthy was,
That of hys price and hys bounte,
Into far lands renownyt was he,
Of thaim I thynk this buk to ma.[1]
Now God gyff grace that I may swa,
Tret it, and bryng it till endyng,
That I say noch but suthfast thyng.

To compose a poem which should be true or suthfast, and yet delectable in the perusal, was, we see, the object of Barbour, and he has admirably succeeded. To the historian, his work is of the most authentic and valuable description: it has been corroborated by original and contemporary records; and the information which it conveys, derived from eye-witnesses and actors in the memorable events which he describes, possesses a freshness and minuteness which delightfully distinguishes it from the tame and insipid annals of the monkish chroniclers. It is valuable not only for its truth, but, to use his own expressive phrase, it represents the deeds of the "stalwart folk who are long since dead, who led their life in great travel, and oft in hard stour or tumult of battle, truly as if we were witnesses of their actions and in their very presence. King Robert of Scotland, 'that was hardy of heart and hand,' the good Sir James of Douglas, who was so worthy that his high price and bounty made his name renowned in foreign lands; the hot and fiery Sir Edward Bruce, whose 'outrageous hardihood' gained and lost him a crown, and the noble Randolph, whose 'trusty

[1] Make.

heart and loyal service were enhanced by his courteous and debonayr manners, and shone out in his fair, pleasant. and broad countenance;" all these, and many more their compeers in war and in honour, are made to pass before us by the venerable Archdeacon, with a clearness of outline, and a richness of colouring. which none but a man of undoubted genius, whose pictures were drawn from the life, could have accomplished.

Nor are the poetical embellishments of the work inferior to such portraits, either in their conception or their execution. It is true, that, from his resolution to adhere strictly to the realities of history, Barbour has renounced every thing like epic machinery; and the narrative is not absurdly interrupted by such uninteresting personages as Discord. Envy, and the tribe of heathen deities; but it abounds in animated descriptions of battles and sieges, in stirring pictures of chivalrous and romantic incidents, in landscapes of rude grandeur and quiet beauty. which do not suffer in comparison even with the works of the most distinguished contemporary bards of the sister-country. It may be right to verify this criticism by some extracts. The advance of the English army to the battle of Loudon Hill is thus strikingly painted:—

When the set day cummyn wes
He sped him fast towart the place
That he namyt for to fycht.
The son wes rysyn schynand brycht,
That schawyt on the scheldis brade.
In twa eschelis ordanyt he had
The folk that he had in ledyng.
The King, wele sone in the morning,

Saw first command thair fyrst eschele,
Arrayet sarraly and wele,
And at thair back som deill ner hand.
He saw the tothyr followand,
Thar bassynettis burnyst brycht,
Agane the sone glemand of lycht.
Thar speris, pennonys, and their scheldis,
Of lycht enlumynyt all the feldis,
Thar best and browdyn wes brycht baner,
And hors hewyt on ser maneris,
And cot armouris of ser colouris,
And hawbrekes that war whyt as flouris,
Maid thaim glitterand as thai war lyk,
Tyll angelys hey of Hewynnys ryk. [1]

This picturesque description reduced into English prose is as follows:—"When the set day had arrived, he, meaning Sir Aymer de Valence, sped him towards the place appointed for the fight. The sun had risen, and his rays struck brilliantly upon the broad shields of the army, which he had divided into two echelons, or squadrons. Meanwhile King Robert, who was on the watch from early dawn, observed the approach of their first squadron, drawn up in close order, and coming boldly forward, whilst the second followed at their back, and not far off. Their helmets, brightly burnished, were gleaming against the sun; and the multitude of their spears, shields, and pennons, cast a radiant illumination over the whole plain. Their embroidered banners displayed over head, their horses covered with various trappings, their coat armours of different colours, and their hawberks white as flowers, made them to glitter as if they had been angels of the kingdom of heaven."

[1] Barbour, p. 157.

When we compare such poetry with the contemporary productions of the bards of England under the reign of Edward III. — with Laurence Minot, for example, or Langland, the reputed author of the Vision of Pierce Plowman — the superiority of the Archdeacon completely justifies the encomium of Warton, whether we look to the poetical spirit of the author, to the taste and judgment in the pictures or reflections which he brings before us, or to the clear and forcible language in which he expresses himself. Let us hear Langland for a moment : —

For first I frayned[1] the freres, and they me full tolden,
That all the fruyt of the fayth was in her foure orders,
And the cofres of Christendom and the keie bothen,
And the locke of byleve[2] lyeth locken in her hondes ;
Then wennede[3] I to wytte, and with a wight I mette,
A minoure in amorwetide, and to this man I saide,
Sir, for great Gode's love the graith[4] thou me tell
Of what myddel erde man myght I best lerne
My crede, for I can it nought, my care is the more ;
And therefore, for Christe's love, thy counseyl I preie.
A Carmene[5] hath y covenant, ye nede me to teche,
Bot for thou knowest Carmes wel, thy counsaile I aske.[6]

On the other hand, if we place the language of Barbour — which, in its Saxon or Teutonic purity, has been pronounced by an eminent scholar superior to the English of the same period — beside the obscure and elliptical dialect of Sir Tristrem, or the more contemporary poem of Sir Gawane, — ascribed to Hucheoue of the Awle Ryall, or Hugh of the Royal Court, — it is impossible to deny him

[1] Enquired of, asked. [2] Belief. [3] Thought.
[4] Truth. [5] Carmelite.
[6] Warton's Hist. of English Poetry, vol. i. p. 296.

the praise of having improved the structure of his native tongue. The following passage, taken at hazard from Sir Tristrem, is scarcely intelligible without a translation: —

A londe thai neighed neighe,
  A forest as it ware,
With hilles that were heighe,
  And holtes that weren hare,
Olond thai sett that sleighe
  With all his winning yare,
With broche and riche beighe,
  A lof of brede yet mare,
    That milde
Weder thai had to fare,
Alond thai left that childe.[1]

Compare this strange stanza with the description of Spring, in the opening of the fourth book of The Bruce: —

This was in Ver, quhen wyntyr tyde,
With his blasts hydyous to byde
Was our drywyn, and birdys smale,
As turturis and the nychtyngale,
Begouth rycht sariely to syng,
And for to mak in thair syngyng
Swete notis, and sownis ser,
And melodys pleasand to her.
And the treis begouth to ma
Burgeans, and brycht blomis alswa,
To wyn the helyng of thair hewid
That wykkyt winter had thaim rewid;

[1] "They approached near a land which appeared a forest with high hills and grey woods. They set this cunning wight on land, with all his winnings ready, with brooch and rich coronet, and besides this a loaf of bread; after which, when they had left that childe upon land, they had mild weather fit for a journey." — *Sir Tristrem*, p. 28.

And all gressys began to spryng.
Into that tyme the nobell Kyng,
With his flote and a few mengye,
Thre hundyr, I trow, thai mycht be,
Is to the se owle of Arane,
A littil forouth, ewyn gane.[1]

How easy is it, with scarcely any alteration of the words or construction, to throw this sweet description into a modern garb.

'Twas in the spring, when winter's tide,
With blasts that bitter are to bide,
Was past and gone; when songsters small,
The turtle and the nightingale,
Began from every bush and bower
Sweet notes of various sound to pour,
Melodious songs of pleasant cheer,
'Stead piping winds with descant drear;
When trees their summer weeds assume,
With opening buds of freshest bloom,
And tresses green by woods are worn,
That wicked winter's blasts had torn,
And fields their emerald mantles wear,
Then forth the noble King did fare;
His galleys launch'd, aboard there were
Scarce full three hundred men — the while
He steer'd his course from Arran's isle.

Even if we take Chaucer's verses on the same sweet season, it has been justly observed by a modern critic, that Barbour suffers little in the comparison.

The birdis that han left their songe
While thei have suffred colde ful stronge,
In wěther's grille, and derke to sight,
Ben in May for the sonne bright,

[1] Barbour, p. 89.

So glad that they shewe in singing
That in ther hert is suche liking
That thei mote singin and ben light:
Then doth the nightingale her might
To maken noise and singen blithe;
Than is blissful many a sithe.
The chilandre and the popingay
That yonge folk entenden aye,
For to ben gaie and amorous
The time is then so savorous.

From many passages in his great poem, Barbour appears to have been read in the classical as well as in the romantic literature of the day. The fidelity of the wives and sisters of Bruce and his companions is illustrated by a parallel instance of female heroism taken from the History of Thebes:—

Men redys when Thebes wes tane,
And King Arista's men wer slane
That assailyt the cite,
That the women of his cuntre
Come for to fech hym hame agane
Quhen thai hard all hys folk was slayne.[1]
* * * * *
In women mekill comfort lyis,
And gret solace on mony wise.

On another occasion, alluded to in the Life of Bruce, where the King, by an exertion of great personal strength and courage, escapes from the attack of John of Lorn, this Celtic chief, with much propriety, alludes to an adventure which befell Golmak Morn, or Gaul the son of Morni, a hero of Irish story; but Barbour, a poet of Saxon blood, and nursed in the lap of romantic fiction,

[1] Barbour, p. 39.

observes it would have been "mar manerlyk," or more appropriate, to have compared him to Gaudifer de Laryss.

> Quhen that the mychty Duk Betyss
> Assailyeit in Gadyrs the forrayours,
> And quhen the King thaim maid recours,
> Duk Betyss tuk on hym the flycht
> That wald ne mair abide to fycht,
> But gud Gandifer the worthy
> Abandonyt hym sa worthily
> For hys reskew, all the fleirs,
> And for to stonay the chassers,
> That Alexander to erth he bar,
> And alswa did he Tholimar,
> And gud Coneus alswa,
> Danklinc alswa, and othir ma,
> Bot at the last thar slayne he wis,
> In that failyeit the liklynes.[1]

In the same book Bruce comforts his followers by an example of the constancy of Scipio, taken from the history of Rome, at the time when Hannibal had reduced the Romans to the greatest distress:—

> Quhen Hannibal thaim wenensyt had
> That off ryngs with rich stanys,
> That war off knychts fyngyrs taneys,
> He sent three bolles to Carthage."[2]

And a little further on, we are presented with the romantic picture of the King reading to his faithful friends, as they sat on the banks of Lochlomond, the Romance of the worthy Ferambrace, with the brave Oliver and Duke Peris, who were besieged by the Soldan Lawyne, or Laban, in

[1] Barbour, p. 43. [2] Ibid. p. 47.

the renowned city of Egrymor, or Agramore, on the river Flagote.

The King the quhiles merrily
Red to thaim that war him by
Romanys of worthi Ferambrace
That worthily our commyn was,
Throw the rycht doughty Olywer,
And how the Duk Peris wer
Assegyt intill Egrymor,
Quhar King Lawyne lay thaim befor,
With ma thousands then I can say:
And bot elewyn within war thai
And a woman — that war sa stad
That thai na mete thair within had,
Bot as thai fra thair fayis wan,
Yet sa contenyt thai thaim than
That thai the tower held manlily,
Till that Rychard of Normandy,
Mare hys fayis warnyt the King,
That wis joyful off this tything:
For he wen'd thai had all bene slayne,
Tharfor he turnyt in hy agayne,
And wan Mantrybill, and passit Flagot,
And syne Lawyne and all his flote
Dispitously discumfyt he,
And delevyrit hys men al free.[1]

This romance of Fierabras, which derives an additional interest from its having been a favourite book with Bruce, must have been, from the similarity of the names, the Norman French original of the same story, which has been epitomised by Mr. Ellis in his excellent work on the Early Metrical Romances.[2] If we may judge of

[1] Barbour, p. 54.

[2] Specimens of the Early English Metrical Romances, vol. ii. p. 370.

the original from the spirited translation of the first stanza, Bruce's taste in the choice of "Sir Fierabras" deserves high commendation.

It befell, between March and May,
 When kind Corage beginneth to prick;
When frith and field waxen gay,
 And every wight desireth her like.

When lovers slepen with open eye,
 As nightingales on greene tree,
And sore desire that they coud fly,
 That they mighten with their love be.

This worthy Soudan in this season
 Shope him in greene wood to goon,
To chase the boar or the venison,
 The wolf, the bear, or the bawson.

He rode, tho' upon a forest stronde,
 With great rout and royalte,
The fairest that was in all that londe,
 With alauntes [1], lymeris [2], and racches [3] free.[4]

Sir James Douglas, and probably many of the barons who followed the King, had been educated in France, and were well acquainted with the French romances of the time; of which Fierabras, from the variety of its incident, and the humorous descriptions in which it abounds, was one of the most popular.

Perhaps, the most striking feature in the poetry of Barbour is that tone of independence and enthusiastic love of liberty which runs, like a golden thread, through the whole texture of his work. His pictures of scenery—his minute discrimi-

[1] Mastiffs. [2] Bloodhounds.
[3] Common hounds.
[4] Ellis, Specimens, vol. ii. p. 372.

nation of character — his delineations of contemporary manners — his faithful adherence to historical truth — his allusions to the romances of chivalry, and introduction of parallel passages from the fashionable literature of the times, — all combine to render his great poem intrinsically valuable to the historical student; but his love of freedom cannot fail to enhance its attractions to every reader who estimates his national liberty as he ought to do. Loyalty to his hereditary monarch, and a determination never to submit to a foreign yoke, are the two principles which seem seated in the heart of the Archdeacon; their presence gives a glow and a warm colouring to every sentiment which he utters; and under their influence he not unfrequently rises into a strain of unaffected eloquence. His Encomium upon Freedom is well known, and has become deservedly one of the most favourite and popular passages in his works; but there are some parts of Bruce's speech to his army before the battle of Bannockburn, which are quite equal to it. Take the following lines, for example:—

And certes methinkis weill that ye
For owt abaysing aucht to be
Worthy, and of gret wasselagis;
For we have three gret awantagis.
The fyrst is, that we haf the rycht,
And for the rycht ay God will fycht,
The tothyr is, that thai cummyn ar,
For lyppyning[1] of thair gret powar,
To sek us in our awine land;
And hes brocht her, rycht till our hand

[1] Trusting.

Ryches in sa gret quantite
That the pourest of you sall be
Bath rych and myclity thar with all,
Giff that we wyne, as weill may fall.
The third is that we for our lyvis,
And for oure children, and for our wyvis,
And for our freedom, and for our land,
Ar strenyeit in battail for to stand.

Barbour is conjectured, on strong grounds, to have written two other works; one on the Original of the Stewarts, the other on the Genealogy of King Brut,—that venerable personage, half a Roman, half a Teutonic shadow, which is present to the sleeping thoughts or waking dreams of all our early historians. Both of these have now perished; but it is comfortable to think that since time was to deprive us of a portion of his labours, the unrelenting tyrant has fixed his envious tooth upon the parchment of the Brut, rather than upon the more excellent work of The Bruce.

ANDREW WYNTON,

PRIOR OF LOCHLEVEN.

ALTHOUGH of the highest value to the historian, the production of Barbour is, strictly speaking, a biography, not a history; and the praise of being the earliest original historian of his country belongs to ANDREW WYNTON, the venerable author of "The Orygynale Chronykyl of Scotland." The life of this learned ecclesiastic has already exercised the research of two writers, well fitted for such a task by their acquaintance with Scottish history and antiquities[1]; and to the very scanty information which they have collected, I shall content myself with adding a few observations which have suggested themselves during a pretty frequent perusal of his quaint, but valuable and often amusing, work. It is, indeed, to the work itself that we are indebted for almost every particular which has been collected regarding the personal history of the author. He informs us that he was a Canon regular of St. Andrew's, Prior of the monastery of St. Serf, which was situated on the Inch, or Island, of Lochleven, a lake in Kinross-shire, rendered interesting by its

1 The late Mr. David Macpherson, and Dr. Irving, the learned author of the Life of Buchanan.

being the scene of the captivity of Mary Queen of Scots. "Lest any," says he, "should bear the blame of my default, I think it right to inform the reader, that my baptismal name is Andrew of Wyntowne; that I am a Canon regular of St. Andrew's, and that by them I was elected, of their grace and favour, Prior of the Inch within Lochleven, although the least worthy of them all, and without any merit of my own."

And for I wyll nane bere the blame
Of my defawte, this is my name
Be baptisme, Androwe of Wyntowne,
Of Sanct Androwys, a chanowne
Regulare, bot nocht forthi
Of thaim all the lest worthy;
Bot of thair grace and thair favoure
I wes but merit, made prioure
Of the Inche wyth-in Loch Lewyne,
Hawand tharof, my tytel ewyn
Of Sanct Androys dyocesy,
Be-twene the Lomounde and Benarty.

Although Wynton modestly disclaims all personal merit, and ascribes his election as Prior to the grace and favour of his brethren, he was an able, pious, and learned man for the times in which he lived; and had devoted his attention to the history of his country at a period when such studies were rarely cultivated. Yet, even in those dark days, he found a patron in Sir John Wemyss, ancestor of the ancient family of this name; at whose request he, at a late period of life, commenced and completed his "Orygynale Chronykyl of Scotland." "He was," says he, "an honest knight and of good fame, and had a full claim to my service; so that, at his in-

stance, I, in my simplicity, composed this treatise." But let us hear his prologue, spoken in his own person: —

For, as I sayde, rude is my wyte,
And sympyl to put all in wryte,
And clerly bring hame tyl knawlage
Of Latyne in-tyl oure langage,
Tyl ilke mannys undyrstandyng;
For syndrenes of thare changyng
Swa throuch folly or nycete,
I dowt confowndyt for to be;
Bot Lordys gyve your courtesy,
Forbere me in this juperty,
And fra thaire Lethe[1] walde me defende,
That can reprove, and wyll noucht mende.
Hawande excusyde my sympylnes,
Syne that I set my besynes
Tyl all youre plesans generaly:
Suppos this tretys sympylly,
I made at the instans of a Larde
That had my serwys in his warde,
Schyr Jhone of the Wemyss be rycht name,
Ane honest knycht, and of gude fame.[2]

This honest knight, to whose good taste and discernment Scottish literature is under high obligations, was Sir John Wemyss, of Reres and Kincaldrum, who lived under the reigns of Robert II. and III., and James I., having been employed as an ambassador to treat concerning the release of this monarch from his captivity in England.[3] The Chronicle itself was finished between the 3d of September, 1420, and the return

[1] Hatred.
[2] Wynton's Chronicle, vol. i. pp. 4, 5.
[3] Douglas, Peerage, vol. ii. p. 617. Rymer, Fœdera, vol. ix. p. 4.

of King James from England, in 1424; and its author, in all probability, did not long survive its conclusion; as he complains, in the prologue to his last book, of the increase of years and infirmity; and represents age, or elde, as daily sending him many painful "brevis," or letters, admonishing him to be looking for a speedy conclusion of his mortal term, when the debt which all must discharge would be claimed on short delay.

> Oft I find impediment,
> With sudan and fierce maladis
> That me cumbris on mony wis,
> And elde me masteris with hir brevis,
> Ilke day me sare aggrevis;
> Scho has me maid monitionne,
> To se for a conclusionne,
> The quhilk behovis to be of debt
> Quhat term or tyme of that be set,
> I can wyt it be na way;
> Bot, weil I wate on schort delay
> At a court I men appeir,
> Fell accusations thare til here,
> Quhare na help thare is bot grace.[1]

Following the absurd taste of his age, the Prior of Lochleven has constructed his Chronicle upon the model of the Polychronicon of Roger of Chester, which was altered and adopted by Higden, and became highly popular about this time. It was the manner of this ancient writer and his imitators, although they professed only to write a history of one particular country, to approach their subject with extreme wariness and circumspection, beginning from the Creation,

[1] Wynton's Chronicle, vol. ii. p. 300.

and winding their way through such high subjects as the dispersion of mankind, the confusion of languages, and the rise of the various monarchies in the world; till, after their various travels, they approached their own happy land, and hung panting over the cradle of their infant history; they then drew a long breath, and commenced their Chronicle in good earnest. According to this method, Wynton presents, first, his reader with a general history of the world. "Towards the beginning of his work," says Dr. Irving, "he treats of the nature of angels, the creation of the world, the death of Abel, the generations of Cain and Seth, the primeval race of giants, the situation of India, Egypt, Africa, Europe, Britain, Ireland, and divers other countries; the confusion of tongues and the origin of poetry and Mahometanism."[1] Having at last reached Britain, he breaks out in the following spirited lines, in which there is an amusing mixture of images of poetic beauty and homely comfort,—fair flowers scattered over the green carpet of nature, along with pease, oats, beer, and wheat,—

And tyl all cattle pasture good.

Blessed Bretayne Beelde sulde be
Of al the ilys in the se;
Quhare flourys are fele on feldys fare,
Hale of hewe baylsom of ayre,
Of al corne there is copy gret,
Pese and atys, bere and quhet,
Bath fruyt on tre and fysche in flude,
And tyl al catale pasture gude.

* * * * *

[1] Irving's Lives, vol. i. p. 280.

Thare wylde in wode has welth at wylle,
Thare hyrdys hydys holme and hille,
Thare bowys bowys all for byrtht,
Bath merle and maweys, mellys of myrtht;
Thare huntyng is at alkyne dere,
And ryght gud hawkyng on rywere;
Of fysche thaire is habowndance,
And nedeful thyng to mannys substance.[1]

Uncouth as this picture appears in the antiquated phraseology of Wynton, if it is the ideas which are the main objects in poetry, the passage is of a superior character, and strikingly descriptive of Britain. The fair fields, overspread with an infinite variety of flowers,—the pleasant verdure and sweet and healthy breezes,—the meadows affording pasture for cattle,—the abundant crops of golden grain,—the flocks and herds covering the sides of the hills,—the luxuriant copses from which the merle and the mavis mingle their "notes of mirth,"—the rich orchards and clear-swelling rivers,—"the fruit on tree and fish in flood,"—the excellent hunting and right good hawking, with the plentiful entertainment for every living thing,—combine to form a picture of romantic beauty and rural enjoyment not altogether unworthy the muse of Spenser or Ariosto. It must be kept in mind, in any criticism upon the merit of this early chronicler, how very limited were the sources from which he was obliged to derive his information; how few advantages he possessed in such works as gave him any models for literary imitation. Of this he himself informs us when he bespeaks the

[1] Winton's Chronicle, vol. i. pp. 13, 14.

reader's indulgence for a work which required much correction. "For," says he, "I found few writings at hand from which I could derive my authorities. I had part, indeed, in the history which Peter Comestor compiled in his day, the Chronicle, also, of Orosius, and of Frère Martyne, besides English and Scottish stories, and various other incidents, which I deemed not inapposite to my matter. When these were exhausted, I found my wit grown dry and unproductive, either of flower or fruit; yet not the less for this do I pursue my original purpose, seeking to win the favour of that rose, which for ever spreads and opens its immortal blossoms for the pleasure of the King of kings."[1]

> ——my wyt is walowide dry
> But floure or froyte, but nocht for thi[2]
> I seek the sawowre of that ros,
> That spansys spredys, and evyre springis
> In plesans of the Kyng of kyngis.

It would be unjust to expect from a writer labouring under such disadvantages any thing like a well digested and classically constructed history, as this term is used in these modern days. We have, on the contrary, instead of a building of correct taste and Grecian proportion, an extraordinary and rambling edifice somewhat resembling the ancient castles, or picturesque monasteries of the times in which the author lived, where, in defiance of all rules and orders, a chamber, or a chapter, was added, ac-

[1] Winton's Chronicle, vol. i. p. 8.
[2] To furthyre fayrly this purpos.

cording to the exigency or the fancy of the moment. The language, too, or materials with which his work is constructed, is as rude and venerable as the ivy-covered walls, or weather-beaten pinnacles, upon which the waves of successive centuries have left the traces of their progress. Yet, what spectator of taste has not often preferred the ancient castle, with all its romantic disproportion, to the symmetrical beauty of the modern edifice? And where is the student, who is an enthusiast in the history and antiquities of his country, that would not rather read the quaint and homely descriptions of the Prior of Lochleven than the pages of modern writers, where vigour, freshness, and originality are so often sacrificed to inspired elegance?

In enumerating the merits of Wynton, the first place ought undoubtedly to be given to his historical accuracy. "His faithful adherence to his authorities," says Mr. Macpherson, "appears from comparing his accounts with unquestionable vouchers, such as the Fœdera Angliæ, and the existing remains of the Register of the Priory of St. Andrew's, that venerable monument of ancient Scottish history and antiquities, generally coeval with the facts recorded in it; whence he has given large extracts, almost literally translated.[1] It is curious, indeed, to compare the simple and unornamented facts of this early writer, as they appear in his veracious narrative, with the same occurrences dressed out by the fertile imagination of Boece, and flaunting in all the gorgeous colours of romantic fiction.

[1] Winton's Chronicle, preface, vol. i. p. 3.

Of this, amongst many examples which might be given, let us take one, which Shakspeare has made immortal — the interview between Macbeth and those supernatural hags the Weird Sisters. In Wynton this whole scene is a dream. Three strange unearthy women, whom he knows to be conversant with futurity, visit his slumbers nightly, one of whom salutes him as Thayne of Crumbachty, or Cromarty, the other as Thayne of Moray, the third as King.

At night he thocht in hys dreaming
That syttand he wes beside the Kyng,
At a sele in huntyng; swa
In-til his leisch had greyhundis twa,
He thocht, quhile he wes swa syttand
He saw three wemen by gangand,
And tha wemen than thocht he
Thre werd sisters mast lyk to be.
The fyrst he hard say gangand by,
Lo, yondyr the Thayne of Crwmbachty;
The tothir woman sayd agane,
Of Morave, yondyr I se the Thayne;
The third than sayd, "I se the Kyng."
All this he herd in hys dremyng.[1]

All this is not only extremely natural and probable, but bears every mark of the truth. Let us for a moment examine the same story as it grows under the hands of Boece, who most truly terms it "an uncouth and wonderful thing." Nocht lang efter hapnit ane uncouth and wonderful thing, be quhilk followit, sone ane gret alteration in the realme. Be aventure Makbeth and Banquho wer passand to Forres quhair King Duncan hapnit to be for the time, and met be the gait

[1] Winton's Chronicle, vol. i. p. 225.

thre wemen, clothit in elrage and uncouth weid. They were jugit be the pepill to be weird sisters. The first of thaim said to Makbeth, "Haie, Thayne of Glammis;" the second said, "Haie, Thayne of Cawder;" and the third said, "Haie, King of Scotland." Than said Banquho, "What wemen be ye sa unmerciful to me and sa favorabill to my companion? For ye gaif to him nocht only landis and gret rentis, bot gret lordschippis and kingdomes, and gevis me nocht:" to this answered the first of thir weird sisters, "We schaw more felicite appearand to the than to him: for thocht he happen to be ane king his empire sall end unhappilee, and nane of his blude sall eftir him succeed; be contrar, thow sall nevir be King, bot of the sall com mony Kingis, quhil his with lang progression sall rejose the croun of Scotland." Als sone as thir wordis wer said thay suddanlie wanist out of sight. This prophecy and divinatioun wes haldin mony dayes in derision to Banquho and Makbeth. For sum time Banquho wald call Makbeth King of Scottis for derisioun; and he, on the samin maner, wald call Banquho the fader of mony kingis. Yet, becaus al thingis succedit as thir wemen devinit, the pepill traistit and jugit thame to be weird sisters.[1] In this amusing passage, which presents a curious commentary on the progress of historical error, we have the rough sketch of that wild and romantic scene which is familiar to every reader of Shakspeare; but, when the great magician touches the tradition with his wand, and the weird sisters start up on the lonely heath,

[1] Bellenden's Boece, vol. ii. p. 259.

"each at once her choppy finger laying upon her skinny lips," he is labouring in his lawful vocation, ruling supreme and blameless in his own dominions, whilst Boece, under the character of a historian, is betraying the truth and assuming the privileges of a writer of romance.

Next to his value as a historical authority, Wynton possesses great merit in the fresh and curious pictures which he has preserved to us of the manners and superstitions of the times. It has been objected to him, indeed, to use the words of his learned editor, that he sometimes runs into descriptions more minute and diffuse than are consistent with the rules of writing history, in answer to which it is sufficient to say, that these rules were unknown in his age. Such descriptions were the defect, perhaps, more properly speaking, the beauty, of several early historians; by them Snorro, the venerable Herodotus of the north, and Froissart, the great feudal painter of chivalry, who, like our Wynton, had the courage to write history in their native languages, bring us home to the scenes they describe, and make us take an interest in the characters which they introduce.[1]

The worthy prior can provide from his poetic scrip every species of intellectual ware, from the driest piece of genealogical history, or the uncouthest catalogue of Pichtish monarchs, to the animated description of a "heady fight, or the moving picture of a tournament or a hunting party." It is well known, that in these days the tournament, which was a popular amusement,

[1] Preface to Wynton's Chronicle, p. 27.

took place, according to previous agreement, under very different circumstances. In justing or running their courses against each other, the knights might either make use of plate or steel-covered shields and blunted spears, or of sharpened spears without any shield to protect them. In the first manner, few accidents could happen; but when the second mode was adopted, which was not unfrequent where the combatants were of different nations, animated by mutual rivalry, the consequences were frequently mortal. Of this Wynton has given us many instances strikingly descriptive of the fierce and warlike manners of the times. In 1338, during the time of war, Henry of Lancaster, Earl of Derby, who had distinguished himself both at home and in the Holy Land, made a courteous request to Sir Alexander Ramsay, that he would meet him at Berwick with twenty knights and gentlemen, to run against an equal number of English, three courses of war.

> He spak til Alysandyr Ramsay,
> And specyally gan hym pray
> For to purchas a company,
> That at the lest they were twenty
> Of gentilmen with scheld and spere,
> To just ilk man three cours of were.[1]

Ramsay, a brave soldier and accomplished gentleman, readily assented; and, on the day appointed, the twenty Scottish champions were at Berwick, where they were sumptuously lodged by Lancaster. On meeting, a singular conversation took place. "In what manner," said the

[1] Wynton's Chronicle, vol. ii. p. 220.

good Earl of Derby, as Wynton calls him, "shall it please you to run at this justing?"—"With plate shields, I suppose," answered Ramsay, "as is commonly practised in these matters."—"Alas, then," rejoined the English earl, "there can be no hurt, and we can win no renown."—"As for that matter," replied Ramsay, "if it so pleases you, perfay we Scots are well content that every man should just in his shirt and drawers."—"Nay," retorted Derby, debonnairly and with a good-humoured smile, "that were somewhat too much also."

Quoth Alysandyr the Ramsay,
It sall lyk til us al perfay,
That ilk man run hys fallow til [1]
In kyrtil alane, gif but ye will. [2]

It was agreed that the courses should be run "as men hostayis;" by which we are to understand that the combatants were neither to be stripped to their kirtles, according to the fierce witticism of Ramsay, nor to joust with bare visage, or with their visors up, as was proposed by another knight, William de la Tour, but armed at all points, and with sharp spears, as if proceeding to a battle or a siege. The consequence of this was the death of two of the English and one of the Scottish champions. William de Ramsay also, a near relation of Sir Alexander, was desperately wounded in the head with a spear, which broke after having pierced the bars of his helmet, and entered deep into the flesh.

[1] Against his fellow.

[2] In nothing but his kirtle.—Wynton, vol. ii. p. 221.

A priest was instantly called; and, whilst the blood gushed from the wound, the knight, who expected immediate death, was shriven, or received absolution in his armour. This sight moved the envy and admiration of the good Earl Derby, who loudly eulogised it, and prayed God, that when his time came, "he might have as fair an ending."

Than said the gud Erle of Derby,
Lo! here a fair sycht sikkerly:
A fairer sycht how may man see,
Than knycht or squire whoeer he be,
In-til his helme hym thus gat schryve? [1]
When I sall pass out of this lyve,
I wald God of his grace wald send
To me on sik manere to end. [2]

Ramsay, however, although he had received an ugly wound, was not destined "on sik manere to end." His brother, Sir Alexander, bade him lie down, put his foot upon the helmet, and seizing hold of the truncheon of the broken spear, wrenched it out by main force; upon which the wounded knight, instead of swooning with the exquisite pain which so rude a leeching must have occasioned, started on his feet, and declared he would soon ail nothing. What stout hearts these men have! was the good Earl of Derby's laconic observation:

Alysandyr than the Ramsay
Gert hym lie down for-outyn let,
And on hys helme his foot he set,

[1] Thus get absolution in his helmet.
[2] Wynton's Chronicle, vol. ii. p. 223.

And wyth gret strength out can aras
The truncheon that thare stickand was.
He rose alone — fra it was oute,
And wyth a good wyll and a stout,
He sayd that he wald ail nathing—
Tharof the Erle had wonderyng,
And gretly him commendyt then —
And said, Lo! stout hartis of men![1]

It would not be difficult to pursue our analysis of the work of this early chronicler through many other passages, which throw a clear and useful light upon the feudal institutions of Scotland; upon the progress of the country in agriculture, commerce, and manufactures; or in the arts which add dignity or ornament to life; but our limits do not permit this. Enough has been said to acquaint the general reader with the character and peculiar merits of the work; and the enthusiast in the study of Scottish history will prefer the pleasure of discovery to the indolent satisfaction of being conducted through its beauties. The precise period of Wynton's death is involved in the same obscurity which covers the history of his life; but it is probable he did not long survive the conclusion of his great work, which he completed in 1424, the memorable year when James I. was restored to his kingdom, after his long captivity in England.

[1] Wynton's Chronicle, vol. ii. p. 236.

JOHN DE FORDUN.

1386.

Whilst Andrew de Wynton was enriching the literature of his country by the composition of a chronicle, founded upon accurate historical documents, and composed for the benefit of the people in their own language, John de Fordun, another ecclesiastic of the same nation, commenced, and brought down to the period of the death of David II. a history of Scotland, which was written in Latin, and entitled "Scotichronicon." It is a singular fact, and gives a melancholy picture of the very slight circulation of literary works, although written by contemporaries, and in the same country, that these two authors were mutually ignorant of each other's productions.

John de Fordun was a priest of the diocese of St. Andrew's, and a chaplain of the church of Aberdeen. Of the particulars of his life, except what he has himself incidentally communicated in the course of his work, little is known. He was patronised by the pious and venerable Cardinal Wardlaw, Bishop of Glasgow, who communicated to him some materials for his history; and he was engaged in its composition during the reign of Richard II., as he has himself informed

us. From the commencement of the history down to the death of David I., in 1153, the work of Fordun is complete, embracing five books of consecutive annals, written, indeed, in the strange monastic taste of the times, but full of valuable information. Of the public transactions during the reigns of the various monarchs who succeeded David I., coming down as far as the famous expedition of De Vienne, the French admiral, into Scotland, in 1385, he had collected, it appears, very full notes, which he had begun to throw into arrangement preparatory to the completion of his labours, when he was interrupted by death. Previous, however, to this event, he had communicated his materials to Walter Bowmaker, or Bower, Abbot of the monastery of Inchcolm, situated upon a little island in the Forth, with the intention that he should bring the work to a conclusion.

The difficulties against which these early writers had to struggle, in the detection of error and the discovery of historical truth, were extremely formidable; and, giving these their due weight, it is, perhaps, more extraordinary that they should have produced any works of intrinsic value, than that their writings should be deformed with the vitiated taste and extravagant superstitions of the age. There is, indeed, every probability, that in the venerable monastery of Icolmkill, where, previous to the union of the Scottish and Pictish kingdoms, the sovereigns of Scotland were solemnly crowned and interred, there must have existed some ancient chronicles, kept by the religious men of this establishment,

recording the succession of their kings, and, perhaps, supplying some materials for the history of their reigns. But, during the course of the tenth century, this monastery was six times burnt and ravaged by the Danes. St. Margaret, the pious and admirable Queen of Malcolm Canmore, rebuilt it in the eleventh age, having found it ruined and desolate; and these successive calamities sufficiently account for the destruction of our histories and chronicles of the ancient Britons, and the gests and annals of the Scots and Picts.

The ravages of the Danes, however, and time and corroding antiquity, *edax vetustas*, have not been the only destroyers of our historical records and monuments. They found another enemy in Edward I., who, under the pretext of consulting the most ancient Scottish annalists for the purpose of deciding in the competition between Bruce and Baliol, and with the real motive of destroying every thing which might thwart his favourite design for the conquest of the country, collected from the libraries of the monasteries and from the repositories of the records of the kingdom every document which treated of our ancient history. These archives, charters, and chronicles he carried into England, and there destroyed some, and changed or garbled others to suit his own claims and purposes, and to deprive the Scots themselves of the power of redarguing his assertions. Of all this, although a spirit of minute and over-fastidious criticism has affected to throw doubt upon the question, there is ample evidence to be found not only in the

English historian Knighton, but in the ancient Chronicle of Cupar, and in a famous public document of those times presented in the name of the estates of Scotland to Pope Boniface VIII. in the year 1301.[1] "As to all these points," to use the words of this remarkable paper, "and with regard to the other defences which may be brought forward, or the liberties which may be claimed, or the rights which may be found existing in the kingdom of Scotland, the King of England has abstracted the existing muniments, and the public records from the treasury, which could have illustrated them; and when he had the custody of this kingdom, he by force and fear caused the same, along with many other bulls, charters, and muniments which confirmed the liberties of the same kingdom, to be abstracted from the treasury, and carried with him into England."

A complete corroboration of this passage is to be found in the circumstance that there still remains a precept, or order, addressed by Edward I. to the then keepers of Edinburgh Castle, commanding them to deliver up all the charters, instruments, writs, and rolls which concerned the rights of the competitors for the crown of Scotland, or regarded the English claim of superiority, or related in any way to the kingdom of Scotland, to be carried off, and placed wherever the King should appoint. The paucity of original documents, from which an authentic and valuable history of Scotland during its earliest ages might have been written at the period when

[1] Knighton, apud X. Scriptores, p. 2469. Hearne's Fordun, vol. iii. pp. 835. 876.

John de Fordun undertook this task, is not, therefore, a subject of much astonishment; and the wonder rather is, that, with so few advantages, he should have produced a work which does not suffer in comparison with the contemporary annalists of England.

The pains and labour, indeed, which he underwent in the collection of materials were great; and are commemorated by a monkish historian in a passage which would be amusing could we convey in the translation any idea of the quaint and bombastic latinity of the original. "After the loss of which chronicles," says this writer, speaking of the mutilation of the national muniments by Edward, "a venerable Scottish priest, by name John Fordun, arose, and feeling his heart titillated and effervescent with patriotic zeal, he applied his hand boldly to the work; nor did he desist from his undertaking, until, by the most laborious study and perseverance, traversing England, and the adjacent provinces of his own country, he had recovered so much of the lost materials as enabled him to compose five volumes of the delectable gests of the Scots, which he drew up in a sufficiently chronicle-like style, as they are to be found in the great volume entitled the 'Scotichronicon.' In this undertaking, it is impossible to refrain from bestowing great praise upon the industry of the author. For, adverting to the fact, that to commit all the record of past ages to the memory is the attribute of God rather than man, he upon this consideration travelled on foot, like an unwearied and investigating bee, through the flowery meadow of Britain, and into the oracular

recesses of Ireland; taking his way through provinces and towns, through universities and colleges, through churches and monasteries, entering into conversation, and not unfrequently sharing at bed and board with historians and chronologists; turning over their books, debating and disputing with them, and pricking down, or intitulating in his descriptive tablets all that most pleased him; in this manner, and by pursuing such indefatigable investigation, he became possessed of the knowledge which was before unknown to him, and, collecting it with studious care in the revolving sinuosities of his parchment code, like rich honeycombs in a historical hive, he, as I have already premised, divided them into five books of elegant composition, which brought down the history to the death of the sainted King David."[1]

Of the five books into which this indefatigable Bee divided his history, the first, which dates the institution of the Scottish monarchy in Britain in the year of the world 4864, by Fergus the son of Ferguhard, may be easily supposed to be the least interesting and instructive. Partaking of that foolish spirit of national pride which he possesses in common with the early monastic historians of other nations, he has been solicitous to draw back the history of his own people to a period of the most remote antiquity, discovering, through the dim perspective of four thousand eight hundred years before our Lord, the Scottish throne, surrounded by the gloom of chaos and old night, and occupied by a long series of sha-

[1] Innes, Critical Essay, vol. i. p. 207.

dowy kings, whose names alone are known to this author, although the prolific brain of Boece has, at a later period, provided them with very full and minute, but altogether apocryphal, annals.

Following the taste of his age, he commences, like Wynton, from the very beginning; for, although he entitles his first chapter "Concerning the ancient origin and gests of the Scots," he slips into a parenthesis, a pretty formidable subject, "the whole sensible world[1];" in which he informs us, that, according to the opinion of the best philosophers, the universe is round, and the earth placed in the middle, being the common centre, and equidistant from every part of the circle of the heavens. This chapter leads to a consideration of the four principal points of the compass, and the four cardinal winds, from which the author slowly descends to the division of the world into Asia, Africa, and Europe; its partition amongst the three sons of Noah, the exact situation of paradise, the history of Europe and its greater islands, and, at last, the first emigration of the Scots in the days of Moses, under Gathelus, son of Neolus, King of Greece. All these initiatory lucubrations are interesting in no other way than so far as they furnish us with a curious picture of the literary credulity of the fourteenth century, and a history of the various wild, shapeless, and incredible traditions which floated over the surface of Scotland at the period when Fordun commenced his collections.

The second book of this ancient chronicler em-

[1] "De vetustate originis, et gestis Scotorum, et primo de mundo sensibili."

braces the history of seven centuries, from the year 330 before Christ to the year of our Lord 403; a famous era, according to this author, as it marks the restoration of the Scottish monarchy by Fergus II. The third book exhibits the history of the Scots from the commencement of the fifth century down to the year 830, which marks the reign of Alpin, the father of Kenneth, who united the Pictish and the Scottish kingdoms. The fourth book occupies a period of two hundred and thirty-six years, from the time of Alpin down to the reign of Malcolm Canmore, the contemporary of William the Conqueror in England; and the fifth book, by far the most valuable portion of the work, commences with the reign of this monarch in 1056, and concludes with the death of David I., 1153. After this period we have nothing but the author's notes, or adversaria, the collections out of which he had intended to compose the remainder of his history, when he was interrupted in his task by death. These, however crude and sometimes disconnected, are highly valuable from the facts which they contain, and the pains and fidelity with which they have been investigated.

It is thus evident that the subjects upon which Fordun has exercised his historical sagacity may be divided into two great classes; the first embracing the original migrations of the Scots, at a period long anterior to any written record; the second including the history of a period for which, even amid the wreck of much that was valuable and important, he had collected very ample authorities. Under the first class we are

necessarily presented with nothing but tradition; and into the controversial points which it involves, the origin of the Scots, and the great Pictish controversy, which have unfortunately been debated with an obstinacy and virulence little suited to the discovery of the truth, it would be ridiculous in a work of this nature to enter at any length. It is singular, however, that, surrounded as the discussion is by gloom, uncertainty, and contradiction, there are some remarkable points of coincidence between the Scottish and the Irish traditions as to their common origin. In both countries we find their earliest historians insisting upon the same story as to their oriental origin. "In the 'Book of Migrations,'" says Mr. O'Connor, "we have a recital that the leaders of the last heathen colony who possessed Ireland were of Scythian extraction, and named themselves Kenea-Scuit, that is, descendants of Scythians. It is stated that, in the East, they learned the use of sixteen letters from a celebrated Phenius, from whom they took the name of Phenii, or Phenicians; it is added that the descendants of this Phenius traversed several countries, particularly those bordering on the Mediterranean and Greek seas; that they sailed through the streights of Hercules, landed on the island of Gadir, or Cadiz, and, having sailed along the western coasts of Spain, settled there amongst the Celtes of that country, and particularly in Brigantea; that, finally, they sailed from Spain to Ireland, where they put an end to their peregrinations and disasters. and made a lasting settlement."[1]

[1] Mr. O'Connor's Third Letter. Collectanca De Rebus Hibernicis, vol. iv, p. 113.

To corroborate this passage, we find it stated in Fordun, that the Scots derived their origin from Gathelos, a king of Greece; that this prince went to Egypt, and thence took his course to Spain, from which country he thrice sent colonies to Ireland, whilst from this island the same people spread themselves amongst some of the western isles of Britain, after which they made a permanent settlement in Scotland, under Fergus, three centuries prior to the Christian era.[1] Now, it is a remarkable circumstance, that, however disfigured by fable, and various adventitious and apocryphal additions, this story of the common origin of the Irish and Scots from Scythia through Egypt, Greece, and Spain, is, in one portion or another, confirmed by many ancient witnesses. If, for example, we turn to Nennius, a Briton, whose "Eulogium Britanniæ" was written in the ninth century, he informs us that the Scots came to Ireland from Spain, and afterwards from Ireland to Dalricta, the name of the first kingdom of the Scots in Britain. If we look to Bede, although he passes over the origin of the Scots, he corroborates one branch of the prevalent story, by bringing them from Ireland under their leader named Renda; and, turning again to the earliest notices regarding the aborigines of Spain, we find, amid the thick darkness, which covers their infant history in common with that of the rest of Europe, the same clear and distinct tradition regarding their Asiatic origin.[2] To these pas-

[1] Innes, Critical Essay on the Ancient Inhabitants of Scotland, vol. i. p. 208.

[2] Depping, Histoire Générale d'Espagne, vol. i. p. 23.

sages many other proofs might be added, in which it is not difficult to detect the same unvarying belief from the wild, vague, and apocryphal additions and interpolations which it has gathered around it in its transmission through the long series of successive centuries; and it seems certainly difficult to resist the conclusion, that the Scots and the Irish appear to have been the same people; that they came originally from Spain, and, in all probability, were both of oriental descent. These observations, however, are thrown out merely as loose thoughts; nor would the author, from the imperfect examination which is all he has yet bestowed on the question, venture to advance them as the grounds of any decided theory upon this remote and difficult question.

Walter Bower, to whom Fordun committed his collections when he found himself too infirm to continue his historical labours, was in all probability the son of John Bower, or Bowmaker, a baillie of the burgh of Haddington, whose name we find in the chamberlain rolls under the year 1395.[1] He was born, as he himself informs us, at Haddington, in the year 1385, under the reign of Robert II.; and, having assumed the religious habit at the age of eighteen, he first finished his studies at home, and then repaired to Paris, that he might perfect himself in the learning of the times. Returning from this famous University, having completed his studies in theology and in the canon law, he was elected Abbot of Inchcolm in 1418, and, about the year 1441, after having

[1] Chamberlain's Accounts, vol. ii. pp. 314—360.

shared in the civil as well as the ecclesiastical government in his own country, he retired from the world to pursue his favourite studies in tranquillity, and to devote himself to the continuation of Fordun's history. To this, he informs us, he was urged by the entreaties of a noble knight, Sir David Stewart of Rosyth, in whom it is pleasing, in those days of darkness and civil and foreign war, to discover the assiduous antiquary and enthusiastic collector of the historical muniments of his country. Bower enjoyed other advantages: he had been the friend and disciple of Fordun, of whom he speaks with affectionate admiration; and he was selected by this father of Scottish history as the fittest person to whom he could intrust the materials which he had collected. From these sources, with the assistance of the chronicles and papers communicated by Sir David Stewart, his patron, and the additional information which his own diligent researches had discovered, Bower composed his Continuation of Fordun, commencing with the death of David I. in 1153, and concluding with the murder of James I. in 1436.

Anxious, however, not to rob his venerable master of any portion of his just praise, Bower, in his Prologue to his Continuation, disclaims all title to the name of author, and modestly entitles himself a compiler, or transcriber, of the materials left by Fordun, which, although they had not received the last revision of the collector, were yet so distinctly arranged as to make the continuation of the History to modern times a work of

comparatively easy execution.[1] Unlike his predecessor Wynton, Fordun appears to have enjoyed much reputation even in his own day, arising, probably, from his having written in Latin,—a circumstance which is now to be deeply regretted. His style is, in no respect, superior to the common monastic Latinity of the age, yet it is warmly commended by Bower, as not only elegant, but worthy of the highest admiration. His Chronicle, indeed, was in such esteem amongst the clergy of those early times,—the only class in the community by whom learning was cultivated, —that most of the monasteries and churches which had been deprived of their ancient chronicles by Edward I. supplied the deficiency by adopting the "Scotichronicon" as the body of their conventual history, making, at the same time, a few inconsiderable additions, and giving it the name of the religious house by whose superiors this piece of plagiarism was committed. It is in this way that we find Fordun, as well as his continuator, Bowmaker, reappearing in different manuscripts under the titles of "The Book of Pasley," "The Book of Scone," "The Book of Cupar," and other denominations, in which the identity of the author is ill concealed under the new and less valuable matter with which the original is associated.

Fordun and Bower are mere annalists, full of credulity and superstition. In their lengthened digressions, and homely narrative, or bombastic attempts at eloquent composition, the infancy of taste and the barbarism of the middle ages is

[1] Fordun, a Hearne, vol. v. p. 1394.

strikingly discernible. Utterly inferior, however, as they are, in order, elegance, and judicious or profound reflection, to the classical models of antiquity, they abound in pictures of feudal magnificence, and in bright and striking touches of contemporary manners, which, if conveyed in the language of the times, would have been superior to the best passages in Wynton. Even under the garb of their monkish Latinity, there is much that is valuable and striking; and, in estimating the intrinsic merits of such writers, we ought to compare them with their English contemporaries,—with Trivet, Higden, Knighton, or Matthew of Westminster. Placed in juxtaposition to these chroniclers, they need not fear even a minute examination; whilst in fidelity and accuracy they are, perhaps, their superiors. Few, and often vague and unsatisfactory, at the best, are the materials out of which the modern historian of Scotland is compelled to construct his imperfect edifice. But it is never to be forgotten, that, without the works of Fordun, Bower, and Wynton, his labours must have been abandoned as hopeless. In the more classic pages of later writers, there is nothing which could have supplied their place; and, indeed, amongst those persons whose peculiar studies have led them to the examination of those touchstones of early history, the public records and charters of the times, it has been made a matter of serious enquiry, whether the history of the country has not suffered materially by the publication of such apocryphal productions as the histories which have been given us by Boece and Bu-

chanan; the former the friend and correspondent of Erasmus, and the latter author the most perfect scholar, and, perhaps, the most powerful and original thinker, of his age; but neither of them fitted, by their habit of patient investigation, their love of truth, and their absence of pre-conceived theory, for the task which they rashly undertook and too hastily accomplished.

JAMES THE FIRST.

HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION.

A PERIOD of sixty-four years elapsed between the death of Robert Bruce and the birth of James I., during which time, although torn by anarchy and domestic faction, the country maintained a remarkable contest for its liberty against the reiterated attacks of England. It was, in this period, eight times invaded by a foreign force; it was betrayed and deserted by David II., the unworthy son and successor of Bruce; it saw, on many occasions, the most powerful of its nobles enlisted under the banner of its enemies; it had to struggle against the military genius and political talents of Edward III. and Henry IV. and V.; and yet, with its inferior resources and divided councils, such was the spirit of the people, and the enthusiastic zeal and ardour with which they clung to their liberty, that, although sore oppressed, they were never conquered, but preserved their freedom in the midst of war, and famine, and pestilence; preferring the prospect of living in a country reduced by repeated invasion to a solitude or a desert, or even the last alternative, of being totally exterminated, to the most flattering offers which could be made of

being united to England, when coupled with the condition that they should renounce their national independence.

On the death of Robert Bruce, David II., on whom the crown had been solemnly settled, was an infant in his sixth year.[1] Randolph Earl of Moray, in the event of the King's death, had already been nominated Regent, and he immediately assumed that high office, with the universal consent of the nobility and the people. Nor had the people any reason to repent this choice. During the three years in which he held the reins of government, he so judiciously blended the vigour and severity necessary in these wild feudal times with the strict justice and benevolence which formed the essential parts of his character, that the nation remained united at home, and feared and respected abroad.

Meanwhile, in obedience to the last wishes of his dear master, Sir James Douglas hastened his preparations for the conveyance of his heart to Jerusalem. The good Sir James was at this time, perhaps, the most illustrious soldier and the most accomplished knight in Europe; and the commission of bearing the heart of Bruce to be deposited in the Holy Sepulchre was completely consonant to the chivalrous and superstitious spirit of the age. His personal suite was as royal as if he had himself been King of Scots: it consisted of seven knights and twenty-six young squires and gentlemen of the first families in the country, with whom he sailed from the port of Sluys, in Flanders, with the object of

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 279.

finding companions with whom he might proceed to the Holy City. From the words of his passport, however, granted by Edward III., on the 1st of September, 1329[1], he appears to have predetermined to bear arms against the Saracens, should an opportunity present itself; and on arriving at Sluys, his desire was gratified by hearing that Alphonso, the King of Castile and Leon, was at that moment engaged in war with Osmyn, the Moorish governor of Granada. He at once determined to take his journey into Spain, on his way to Jerusalem, and no entreaties could prevail upon him to make a longer stay than a few days in Flanders. During all this time he remained on shipboard, entertaining his visiters with a splendid hospitality. When he sat at table, the King's heart, enshrined in a silver casket richly wrought and enamelled, hung round his neck; and the feast was as sumptuous and royal as if the Bruce himself had been present. The vessels were all, even the commonest, of gold and silver; the wines were richly spiced, and of two kinds: youths and pages of the noblest blood in Scotland waited on the guests; and, amid the martial accompaniment of trumpets and clarions, and the display of rich and varied banners, the strangers became acquainted with that "renowned" champion of liberty, whose deeds, from the constant communication between the two countries, were almost as well known in Flanders as in his own land. From Sluys, Douglas and his company sailed for Spain; and, after a tempestuous passage, arrived at Seville, where,

[1] Fœdera, vol. iv. p. 400.

having run their ship up the Guadalquivir, they were received with the highest honour in the camp of Alphonso, who proffered to the Scottish leader gold and treasure, horses and arms; all of which Douglas declined, declaring that they did not befit a pilgrim travelling, not for this world's honour, but his soul's good. Yet, he added, having learnt that he was at this time warring against the infidels, he had sought his country, that he might join his army and offer him his best service.

Eager to receive the assistance of so "fair a company of brave knights and soldiers," Alphonso gave them a princely welcome; and many foreign captains, who had heard of the fame of Douglas, flocked round him with warlike curiosity. Amongst these, as we learn from Barbour, was an illustrious knight, celebrated throughout Christendom for his uncommon hardihood, whose countenance was hideously disfigured and covered over with the scars of wounds received in battle. On being introduced to Douglas, this foreigner, who was proud of his honourable deformities, expressed his astonishment that so celebrated a knight should have so smooth and unmaimed a countenance. "I thank God," answered the good Sir James, "that in all my perils he left my hands free to protect my head." This answer, according to the contemporary who has recorded it, was received with great applause, for, although given meekly and with much modesty, it had deep meaning, and conveyed a severe reproof.[1] After some time Alphonso invested Gibraltar, and Douglas assisted in the siege; but he who at

[1] Barbour, pp. 415, 416.

home had escaped in seventy battles[1], was destined to meet his death in his first foreign field. The Moorish King advanced at the head of a numerous army, with the determination of raising the siege, and Alphonso having resolved on giving him battle, intrusted the leading of the vaward to Douglas; the conduct of the second battle to the Grand Master of St. Jacques; whilst he himself commanded the rear division.[2] In his first attack upon the infidels, the good Sir James was victorious; the enemy were broken; and so well was he supported by the rear and the centre, that, after a short resistance, their whole army was routed, and their camp taken. The Scottish leader, however, whilst the Spaniards were engaged in plunder, pursued the flying infidels at the head of a small band of his own knights, and, ere he was aware, the Saracens rallied, and intercepted his retreat to the main body of his army. Seeing himself surrounded, Douglas attempted to cut his way back to his friends. Taking the casket from his neck, in which was the heart of Bruce, he cast it into the thickest of the enemy, and exclaiming, "Now pass onward as thou wert wont, and Douglas will follow thee, or die," charged with so furious an onset that he soon cleared a space around him. Had it been possible to send a reinforcement, he might have made good his return to the camp; but he was enveloped in a cloud of Moorish horsemen, which thickened every moment; and at last fell, covered with innumerable wounds. Along with

1 Fordun, vol. ii. p. 302.
2 Barbour, p. 417.

him were slain Sir William Sinclair of Roslin, with Sir Walter and Sir Robert Logan; and not far from his dead body was found the precious casket, which was carefully preserved.[1] Sir William Keith, who was in the suite of Douglas, but owing to a severe wound had not been present in this fatal conflict, took the command of the relics of the Scots, and immediately commenced preparations for their return. His first care, however, was to pay the last offices to his friend. "After his men," says Barbour, "had long mourned for Sir James, they debowelled him, separating from the bones the whole of the flesh, which was interred in holy ground with much solemnity. His skeleton they carefully preserved, and carried to their ship[2];" after which they embarked for England, where they arrived in safety, and thence departed into Scotland, bringing with them the heart of the King, and the last remains of that great man to whose care it had been confided. The heart, shrined in its silver casket, was deposited by Randolph in the abbey of Melrose, and the bones of the good Sir James committed to earth in his own church of Douglas, where his son Sir Archibald erected to his memory a rich alabaster monument, which yet remains.[3]

On the arrival of Sir William Keith in Scotland, he found the governor, Randolph, engaged in preparations to repel an invasion of the English, arising out of an alleged infringement of the treaty of Northampton. By one of its articles, the Scottish estates of Henry Percy, Thomas Lord Wake,

[1] Barbour, p. 422. [2] Ibid. [3] Ibid.

and Henry Beaumont, which had been forfeited by Bruce, and annexed to the crown, were promised to be restored.[1] According to this agreement, the lands of Henry Percy were restored; but Randolph, aware that Wake and Beaumont were violent enemies of the peace with Scotland, and suspecting a plot between them and Edward Baliol, the only son of the late king, for the recovery of the crown, prudently delayed all measures for reinstating these powerful barons. Unwilling to incur the odium of an open infringement of the treaty, Edward III. contented himself with demanding the restitution of these lands; but he at the same time secretly recalled Edward Baliol from France, where he then resided, and permitted him, with the disinherited lords, to assemble a small force, with which they embarked at Ravensburgh, at the mouth of the Humber, with the determination of invading Scotland by sea.

At this critical moment, Randolph the Regent, who with his usual vigour and activity had assembled an army, and placed himself at its head, died suddenly in the camp at Musselburgh, under a strong suspicion of poison; and scarcely had the estates time to assemble and place the reins of government in the feeble hands of the Earl of Mar, when intelligence arrived that Baliol and the English fleet had entered the Forth. The want of such men as Randolph and the good Sir James was now apparent; for the English disembarked

1 The reader must be aware, that during the long wars in which Robert Bruce wrested the kingdom from Edward I. and II., many Scottish estates were bestowed by these monarchs upon their English nobles.

at Wester Kinghorn without any serious opposition, and instantly advanced to Dumfermline, where they seized a depôt of arms and provisions.

The rapidity of the revolution brought about by this handful of adventurers has excited the wonder of our historians; but many circumstances combine to show that Baliol had friends amongst the Scottish barons; and that the, apparently, unaccountable success of his invasion, was owing to this secret intelligence. When he and the disinherited lords first landed, their utmost force did not exceed four hundred men; but in a few days it had increased to two thousand, and with these he did not hesitate a moment to advance to Perth, fearlessly throwing himself between the armies of the Earl of Mar and the Earl of March; the first of which consisted of thirty thousand men, and the second of nearly an equal number. March, as his future conduct effectually showed, was completely in his interest; and even, if we are not to credit the assertion made by Barnes on the authority of an ancient manuscript, that Mar had engaged in a traitorous intercourse with the enemy, it is certain that Baliol kept up a secret correspondence with one of the barons who commanded under him.

The army of the Regent Mar lay encamped on the moor of Dupplin; between it and the enemy ran the river Earne; and at Auchterarder, only eight miles' distance from Baliol, whose position was at Forteviot, was the army of March.[1] At midnight, Andrew Moray of Tullibardin led the English army to a ford in the river Earne, in

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 304.

which he had fixed a stake to mark the spot; and whilst the host of Mar was buried in sleep, the enemy passed over in silence, and, marching by Gask and Dupplin, broke in upon the Scottish camp, and commenced a dreadful slaughter. In a moment all was horror and confusion; but Randolph, the young Earl of Murray, Robert Bruce, a natural son of the late King, and the Earl of Monteith, collected a small body, and nobly devoting themselves to save the rest of the army, kept the English in check for a short time, and gave the Regent time to array his men.

Even now, had Mar possessed any military talents, the day might have been retrieved, for the soldiers had recovered from their panic, and as the day began to break, the inferior numbers of the English became apparent. But all was lost by his folly and precipitation: rushing on without order or discipline, he precipitated himself, at the head of his whole immense force, upon the small but compact phalanx of the enemy. In an instant Randolph and his little squadron, which had till now kept Baliol in check, were overwhelmed and trodden down by the irresistible mass of their own army; so dreadfully were they crowded and compressed, that many had neither room to breathe or to wield their weapons; spears, shields, pikes, maces, and the steel points of pennons and gonfanons were so thickly commingled, that an old author compares the mass to an enormous animal covered with scales and bristles of steel, rolling to and fro, and unable to escape the mortal attacks of its enemies.[1] Multitudes

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 305.

of the Scots were suffocated or trodden to death, without having room to draw their swords; whilst the English, with ample space to fight, and under brave leaders, commenced an unsparing slaughter, which continued from early dawn till nine in the morning. Mar himself, the Earls of Moray, Carrick, and Monteith, with Fraser, great chamberlain of Scotland, and many other knights and gentlemen, were amongst the slain, whilst nearly thirteen thousand men were left dead upon the field. The rest of the army were either made prisoners or dispersed, and Baliol, elated with his easy victory, pressed forward to Perth, which he occupied, throwing up fortifications, and preparing to stand a siege in case March, whose army was in the neighbourhood, should attack him.

Of this, however, as the result evinced, he could not have entertained any serious apprehension. That baron, having heard of the defeat at Dupplin, evinced a determined dislike to continue the war; Beaumont, one of the most powerful of Baliol's assistants, had secured a friendly correspondence with his army; and after a decent interval of suspense and hesitation, March seized the first pretext which offered to disband his army[1], and leave Scotland at the mercy of its English enemies.

Thus, two years only after the death of Bruce, that noble fabric of freedom, which it had cost a war of thirty years to raise, at the expense of so much blood and suffering, was overturned within less than a month, by a revolution which at first sight appears almost miraculous. To suppose that this could be done without treachery on the

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 306.

part of the Scottish leaders, who commanded an army of sixty thousand men against a force amounting only to four hundred on their landing at Kinghorn, appears ridiculous; and, indeed, treason to a certain degree has been proved.[1] The opportune death of Randolph, under an allegation of poison, and without previous illness; the fact that the English were conducted over the Earne by a renegade Scottish baron; the assertion of Beaumont, that he had friends in March's army, and the sudden desertion of the cause by that Earl himself;—all establish the secret correspondence of Baliol, and afford a satisfactory solution of a difficulty which otherwise appears inexplicable.

On the 24th of September, Edward Baliol was crowned at Scone; and having intrusted Perth to the custody of the Earl of Fife, repaired to the south; and in an interview with the English King at Roxburgh basely surrendered the independence of his country into the hands of Edward. He acknowledged this monarch as rightful sovereign and lord superior of the realm of Scotland, agreed to the surrender of Berwick, and promised to assist him as his vassal in all his wars, under the penalty of 200,000*l.*, or the annexation of the whole kingdom to England; whilst Edward, considering it unnecessary any longer to conceal his share in this revolution, dropped the mask, and plainly declared that the victory of Baliol was procured by the assistance of his good subjects, and with his express permission.[2]

Although nothing could be more selfish and

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 307. [2] Fœdera, vol. iv. p. 536. 539.

treacherous than the proceedings of many of the Scottish nobles, still the period of which we now speak was not deficient in many instances of patriotic virtue and high military talent: a small band of independent barons, principally composed of individuals from the noble houses of Moray, Douglas, Seton, Stewart, Ramsay, and Argyle, united their efforts for the defence of the country, and, amidst defeats and calamities which would have broken any ordinary spirit, contrived, in different parts of Scotland, to keep alive the flame of resistance; and even when hope was almost extinguished by despair, to save the nation from final subjugation.

Of these individuals, perhaps, the most illustrious was Sir Andrew Moray of Bothwell, who was promoted to the regency of the kingdom in 1332, under circumstances of peculiar difficulty. The father of this eminent man was the chosen friend and companion of Wallace; and at a time when the petty jealousies of the Scottish nobles induced them to desert this great leader, he alone preferred the welfare of his country to the gratification of his feudal pride, and met his death in the battle of Stirling. From that moment his son, then a youth of eighteen, became an object of the warmest interest to Wallace, his pupil in war, his sharer in the command of the army when he invaded England in 1297; and in this great school he acquired that early experience in military affairs, which, assisted by his own natural talents, combined to make him one of the best leaders in Scotland. Owing to his near connection with the Comyns, his grand-

mother having been a daughter of the Red Comyn slain by Bruce, he does not appear to have joined his party, or to have taken any active share in his early struggles for the crown; yet we do not meet with him in the ranks of the Comyn faction, or of those who so obstinately opposed the King; and he appears to have lived in retirement till the triumph of Bruce was complete, and it became evident that the cause of the monarch was that of the country.

Previous, however, to the death of the King, the Lord of Bothwell was completely restored to the royal favour. He married the King's sister, Christian Bruce or Seton, widow of Sir Christopher de Seton who was executed in England; and when the minority of David II., the death of Sir James Douglas and of Randolph, and the renewal of the attempts to subdue Scotland by Edward III., combined to place the kingdom under circumstances of peculiar difficulty and danger, Sir Andrew Moray did not hesitate for a moment to declare himself a strenuous opponent of Baliol, and to lend the benefit of his power and rank, and his veteran experience in war, to expel him from the country whose independence he had basely bartered for the assistance of the English monarch.

In 1332, after the imbecility of the Earl of Mar, then regent of the kingdom, and the treachery of some of the Scottish chiefs, had led to the defeat of the patriotic party in the battle of Dupplin, and to the subsequent coronation of Baliol, the voice of the few nobles, who were still true, and of the people who had never been otherwise,

conferred the office of Regent upon Moray, who ably fulfilled the charge. With resources so slender that he could not risk a general battle against armies so greatly his superior in numbers and equipment, he yet contrived to keep alive the spirit of resistance, and, by repeating the lessons which he had learned under Wallace, he saved the country from despair, and protracted the struggle till it was crowned with success.

His first care was to provide for the safety of his youthful sovereign, David II., then a boy in his ninth year, whom he sent to France, under the charge of Malcolm Fleming, where the son of Bruce was received by Philip of Valois, the reigning monarch, with great distinction.[1] He next began to organise a general plan of resistance: around him rallied all the brave and determined spirits who were resolved never to resign their freedom; and the pusillanimous act of Baliol, in surrendering to Edward III. the liberties of Scotland, completely estranged from him the whole body of the nation, and rendered his name odious in the country. The obstinate courage and determined temper of the old companions of Wallace, whose children were now grown into men, began again to appear; and the spirit of Douglas, and Randolph, and Bruce, revived in their descendants or connections.

Archibald Douglas, brother of the good Sir James, Randolph Earl of Moray, second son of the great Randolph, and Simon Fraser, the son, or the grandson, of the brave and unfortunate Sir Simon Fraser, who was executed by Edward I. in

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 307.

1304, having collected a body of a thousand armed horse, by a sudden and rapid night march, performed in the depth of winter, surprised Baliol at Annan, broke into his encampment, and so completely routed and dispersed his army, that he fled, alone, and almost naked, into England. He returned, however, within a short period, with a large reinforcement of English troops; and having established his head-quarters at Roxburgh, determined to besiege Berwick.[1] Soon after this, Sir Andrew Moray, the Regent, in a gallant assault of Baliol, was made prisoner, and carried to Edward III. at Durham, who detained him in captivity for nearly two years. It was an age when chivalry in both nations was carried to the highest pitch of splendour in its pageants and extravagance in its principles; and the accident which deprived the country of the services of Moray, its ablest leader, is to be ascribed to this fantastic system. In the attack upon the English troops on the bridge of Roxburgh, Ralph Golding, an intrepid Scottish esquire, having pushed before the rest, was struck down, and in imminent danger. Moray, forgetful of his higher duties, rushed forward before his men; and, alone and unsupported, threw himself over the prostrate soldier, and rescued him from death. Both were instantly surrounded; and the Regent, declaring his rank, called out that he would surrender himself prisoner to none but the King of England, who, at the head of a great army, was then on his advance to Scotland.

Moray's place, however, was supplied by other

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 307, 309.

eminent men, who stood forward at this crisis, if not with the same ability, at least with an equal devotion to the great cause in which they were engaged. Among these were Archibald Douglas, who assumed the regency, Sir Alexander Seton, Sir Alexander Ramsay, and many others: but the loss of the great battle of Halidon, in which Douglas was mortally wounded; the fall of Berwick, which had been defended by Seton; and the subsequent ceremony, which Baliol now repeated for the second time, of surrendering into the hands of his liege lord, Edward III., the national liberties, resigning for ever a large proportion of his dominions to be annexed to England, and consenting to hold his crown as a vassal of the English monarch; — all these events, which occurred in rapid succession after the capture of Sir Andrew Moray, could not fail to reduce the spirit of the people to something almost bordering upon despair. The humiliation of the kingdom was imagined to be complete; and it was generally said in England "that the Scottish wars were at last brought to a conclusion, since in that country there was not left a single man who had power enough to bring an army into the field, or sufficient ability to command it if it were assembled."[1]

At this dark and hopeless moment, Sir Andrew Moray, either by escape or by ransom, returned from his captivity; and the re-appearance in Scotland of this veteran leader was a signal for the immediate resumption of hostilities. Around him instantly rallied the few remaining friends of liberty, and, with indefatigable spirit, re-

[1] Murimuth, p. 81.

organised their schemes of resistance. Malcolm Fleming, Alan de Vypont, Robert Lauder, and a brave soldier, of great experience although of low birth, named Thomson, held out some places of strength against the enemy; whilst the Steward of Scotland, then a youth of seventeen, whose lands had been given by Baliol to the Earl of Athole, escaped from his concealment in Bute, and at the head of a small band of his vassals resolutely resumed the war. He was soon joined by Randolph Earl of Moray, who had taken refuge in France after the battle of Halidon; by Colin Campbell of Lochow, the ancestor of the family of Argyle; and by Sir William Keith of Galston: and such was the spirit and ability with which their operations were conducted, that, amidst repeated and sanguinary reverses, they still maintained their opposition, till their perseverance was crowned with success.

During this renewed war, which was fertile in chivalrous and romantic incidents, Edward III., at the head of overwhelming armies, which, for the time, swept every thing before them, twice invaded Scotland, and reinstated Baliol, his vassal king, on his precarious throne; whilst the Earl of Athole, who had joined the English, was promoted, as the reward of his desertion, to the office of governor, under Baliol.[1] The situation of this unhappy country at this moment was extraordinary. The single castle-fortress of Kildrummie was held by Christian Bruce, the sister of Robert Bruce, and the wife of Sir Andrew Moray; whilst this veteran baron, with two others,

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 320.

Sir William Douglas of Liddisdale, and the Earl of March, were the only men of rank in the nation who had not sworn allegiance to Edward. Proud of his new office, and confident in his superior strength, Athole now determined to make himself master of Kildrummie; and intelligence reached Sir Andrew that his army, on its advance to the siege, had reached Kilblene. Smarting under a sense of public and private wrongs, Moray speedily collected a body of eight hundred men. A brave but obscure individual, named John Craig, one of those champions who, in this war of liberty, sometimes started up from amongst the ranks of the people, suddenly joined him with three hundred soldiers; and this little army, raging, to use the expression of an ancient historian, like bears or lions robbed of their cubs, marched against Athole, and attacked him with such fury, that, although triple their number, his force was routed with great slaughter, and he himself slain under an oak in the forest of Kilblene.[1]

This important success was followed by the promotion of Sir Andrew Moray, for the second time, to the office of Regent, and the renewal of hostilities, for three years, with the most determined perseverance upon the part of the English monarch, who twice invaded the country during the year 1336. He was opposed, however, with equal energy by the Scottish leader, who carried into practice, with great success, the military lessons which he had learned under Wallace; and, avoiding the hazard of a general battle, protracted the war, till the English were compelled,

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 320.

by famine and distress, to retreat from a country where they had no enemy to conquer, and no resources to support them. It was at this critical season that the people of Scotland, encouraged by the example and guided by the military talents of Moray the Regent, exerted themselves with an energy and enthusiasm which was not unworthy of the times of Wallace and Bruce; whilst the great military talents of Edward III. ultimately failed in securing any permanent advantage.

Although of Randolph's children, one son had been slain at Dupplin, and the second was a captive in England, the heroic spirit of the family broke out in his daughter, the Countess of March. This lady, known in Scottish history by the name of Black Agnes of Dunbar, during the absence of her lord defended her castle, in person, against the utmost efforts of the English, who besieged it for nineteen weeks with a numerous army, under the command of the Earls of Salisbury and Arundel, but were finally compelled to retire, with the disgrace of having been defeated by a woman. The Countess herself was constantly on the walls, encouraging the troops by her presence, superintending the repairs, assuming the direction of the engines, and often taunting the English by fierce witticisms more remarkable for their humour than their delicacy. Her efforts in defence of the country were ably supported by Sir Alexander Ramsay, and Sir William Douglas of Liddisdale. Douglas is denominated, by Fordun, the flower of the chivalry of Annandale; and, although sometimes rashly forgetting the prudence of the patriot in the punctilious honour

of the knight, his efforts against the enemy were of essential importance in keeping up the spirit of resistance. Ramsay, an experienced soldier, took refuge, with a band of resolute followers, in the romantic caves of Hawthornden, from which he made expeditions against the English convoys and foraging parties, with such success, that he was joined by multitudes of his countrymen; and every bold and adventurous youth in the country became eager to be admitted into his service; "and was little thought," says an ancient historian, "unless he had, at one time or other, been a volunteer in Alexander Ramsay's band; so necessary a branch of warlike education was this thought by all who had an ambition to excel in arms.[1]

Seconded by these able associates, Sir Andrew Moray, the Regent, recovered many of the principal fortresses in the country; expelled the English barons who had fixed themselves upon the lands belonging to the hereditary Scottish nobles; and, at the moment when he had wrested a large portion of the kingdom out of the hands of the enemy, and compelled Edward III. to abandon, for the present, all hopes of recovering the advantage which he had lost, this brave and veteran leader was seized with a mortal illness, and died, at his castle of Avoch, in Ross-shire. In an age when, even amongst the most consistent of the nobles, it is difficult to point out one who had not temporised, and saved his individual power and consequence by the sacrifice of independence, the character of Sir Andrew

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 333.

Moray stands out brightly and prominently beside that of Wallace, his old master in war; and he could say, with justice, that on no occasion had he ever sworn fealty to any King of England. A rude simplicity of ancient manners, a stern and inflexible integrity, a sound judgment, and a collected confidence in his own plan of military operations, appear to have been the distinguishing features in his mind. An ancient chronicler, who received his information from those who had served under Moray, sums up his character in a few words:—"He was a lord of great bounty; stout and full of hardihood; wise and honest in counsel; of sober and chaste life; of an open and liberal hand; unaffectedly devout, and attentive to his religious duties, being much in prayers, and accompanying his orisons with frequent alms-deeds and charity to the poor." The Regent, whose death was universally regarded as a public calamity, was interred in the chapel of Rosmartin, or Rosemarkie; but his body was afterwards raised, and carried to Dumfermline, where it was buried before the altar of the Blessed Virgin, mingling with the heroic dust of Bruce and Randolph.

On the death of Moray, the regency of the kingdom was conferred upon the Steward of Scotland, afterwards Robert II., who sustained the war with the utmost vigour and ability, and, assisted by the Knight of Liddisdale and Sir Alexander Ramsay, recovered nearly the whole country out of the hands of the enemy. Dispirited by his repeated failures, incensed at the pusillanimity of Baliol, and occupied by his gigantic schemes

of conquest in France, Edward III. became at last convinced that the reduction of Scotland, by conquest, was not practicable in the circumstances under which he was then placed; and that political intrigue, and an attempt to corrupt the chief men who were at the head of affairs, might lead, though slowly, to a more certain and successful result.

It was at this crisis that DAVID II. and his consort, after a residence of nine years in France, returned to their dominions[1]; and, unfortunately for the country, the young monarch soon discovered a character which it needed little penetration to foresee would be likely to involve the country in new difficulties. To a very feeble and limited capacity, he united great obstinacy, a haughty temper, an extreme love of pleasure, and a disposition to make every sacrifice for the immediate gratification of personal resentments. All this was decidedly shown in the history of his reign; which presents us with the uncommon spectacle of a nation struggling for its liberties against the intrigues not only of its ancient enemy, but of its own sovereign, who, reduced by his rashness to the condition of a captive, was ready, for the recovery of his liberty, to sacrifice the most solemn obligations by which he was bound to his people.

For the unworthy conduct of the only son and successor of Bruce, there is perhaps some apology to be found in the trying circumstances under which his character was formed. At the time of his coronation he was only eight years of age; and

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 334.

when the tumultuous state of the country rendered it dangerous for the minor sovereign to remain within his own dominions, he obtained an asylum in France, in which country he lived for nine years before it was deemed safe for him to return to Scotland. When he was at length restored to his people, in 1342, and had just begun to exercise the powers of government, his rashness and obstinacy soon involved him in a still deeper calamity: he lost the battle of Durham, was taken prisoner, carried to the Tower, and spent eleven of the best years of his life in a hopeless captivity in England. Enlarged at last, under an enormous ransom, his unfortunate reign, which might be said only to have then begun, was one continued scene of dissension and treachery, in which the sovereign, forgetful of his duties to his people, and actuated by a jealousy of his successor, agreed to throw himself into the arms of England, and to make a traffic of the liberty of the country. He even proceeded so far as to propose that Lionel, one of the sons of Edward III., should become his successor on the throne: but it was the unanimous and indignant reply of the barons of that kingdom, "We never will suffer an Englishman to rule over us;" and the King became convinced that he had not only over-rated his own influence, but had formed too low an estimate of the free and independent spirit yet cherished by the great body of the nation.[1] That this base project was defeated, the country owed to the conduct of the Steward of Scotland, son of Marjory the only daughter of Robert Bruce, and declared the legitimate heir

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 366.

to the throne by a solemn act of the three estates. To that throne he succeeded, on the death of David II., in 1371; and although his more brilliant and energetic career, as regent of the kingdom, has the effect of throwing into the shade the mild and more pacific virtues of his kingly life, still the administration of ROBERT II. was firm, dignified, and successful.

The difficulties against which he had to contend were of a different description from those which beset the government under the reign of his predecessor, and during his own regency. Scotland was no longer the scene of constant war; her obstinate and protracted resistance against foreign aggression had been crowned with success; and the opening of the reign of Robert II. witnessed the death of the Black Prince, and of his victorious father, in circumstances of calamity, and surrounded by reverses, which present a melancholy but useful commentary upon the passion for military glory and the lust of unjust dominion. The sceptre of England was now held in the feeble hand of Richard II., a boy of eleven years of age; and although, during the minority and the subsequent reign of this weak monarch, the war continued, with various success on either side, it was no longer a desperate struggle by the Scots for their ancient freedom and their national existence. These they had permanently secured; and further hostilities were rather to be regarded as the ebullitions of border tumult and national animosity, than the result of any serious or determined plan of operations on the part of England.

The war, indeed, was totally deficient in the

interest which arises out of great results, although it was rich in chivalrous adventure, and prolific in picturesque characters. The famous John of Gaunt, uncle to Richard II., appeared in Scotland at the head of an army which effected nothing: John de Vienne, Admiral of France, and then accounted one of the best soldiers in Europe, brought to the assistance of the Scots a reinforcement of foreign knights and men at arms, who, after devouring the country, and harassing the Scottish leaders in their accustomed tactics, returned in great distress to France. In the mean time, an expedition against Scotland, by Richard II. in person, was attended with little but the usual ravage; whilst an almost simultaneous invasion of England, under the command of the Earl of Douglas, was met by the well-known Hotspur, and terminated in the celebrated battle of Otterburn, in which Hotspur was taken prisoner, and the Scots obtained a victory, which was dearly purchased by the death of the brave Earl of Douglas.

The conflict deserves a moment's notice, as illustrative of the manners of the times. It arose out of the circumstance of Douglas having seized the pennon of Percy before the walls of Berwick; adding a defiance to its master, which he imagined himself bound in honour to accept. Hotspur hastily collected a chosen body of men; overtook his enemy by a forced march; and, arriving at their encampment late in a serene evening in August, instantly attacked him. As the battle continued, the moon rose; and Percy and Douglas, who enjoyed the reputation of being the best

soldiers in their respective nations, obstinately refused to be separated. Douglas, a man of great strength and stature, fought with a battle-axe, which he wielded with both hands, cutting a lane into the press of English knights, and, in the excitation and madness of romantic valour, recklessly despising both numbers and danger. Followed only by a few of his men, amongst whom was Lundie his chaplain, a gigantic priest, clothed in full armour, he was at last borne to the earth by the irresistible strength of the English spears, and mortally wounded in the head and neck: Lundie, however, who fought by his side, bestrode his dying master, and cleared a small space where he lay. At this moment he was discovered by his kinsman, Sir James Lindsay, who ran eagerly forward, and, embracing him, enquired how it fared with him. "Poorly enough," said Douglas: "I am dying; but I thank God it is in my armour, as my fathers have done, and not in my bed: but, dear kinsman, if you love me, raise my banner; for he who should bear it lies slain beside me; and, I beseech you, conceal my death. There is a prophecy in our house, that a dead Douglas shall gain a field; and would you but fight a little longer, it might happen that I should be the man." As he said this, Douglas expired; and his heroic injunctions were obeyed. A mantle was thrown over the body; his banner was again raised; and, with renewed shouts of "Douglas! Douglas!" the English were attacked with an overwhelming enthusiasm, which compelled them to break into disorder, and at last concluded in a total rout. Hotspur was made

prisoner, and nearly the whole chivalry of Northumberland either slain or taken captive.[1]

From this period till the revolution in England which concluded in the deposition of Richard II., and the usurpation of the throne by Henry IV., a monarch of great ability and energy, the unsettled state of England caused the Scottish war to languish, and the King had little to dread from the active hostility of England; but there were other dangers against which he had to contend, the more formidable, because they arose out of the internal condition of the country. Even under the reign of Robert Bruce, the power of the aristocracy of Scotland had become a subject of dread and anxiety to that monarch; and we have seen that his attempts to check it conducted in all probability to that fatal conspiracy, which, but for a timely discovery, might have overturned his government, and terminated his life. The events, however, which had occurred since that period, had increased to a great degree the authority of the barons; and the feudal system, which on all occasions gave such unlimited power to the nobility, had been strengthened by constant war, and by the habits of implicit obedience and dependence which it produces in vassals towards their lords. The right of avenging their own quarrels, and determining all disputes by the sword; the habit of regarding with contempt the slow, uncertain, and more pacific process of the law; the proud disregard of the kingly or the judicial prerogative; the contempt of the

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. pp. 405, 406. Wynton, vol. ii. pp. 338, 339, 340.

most solemn acts of the legislature, and of the rights of the lower classes in the state; and the sanguinary violence and capricious abuse of authority, of which they gave such frequent examples; all contributed to render the aristocracy of Scotland at this period a most turbulent and powerful body.

It unfortunately happened that the character of Robert II., who on his accession to the throne had reached his fifty-fifth year, and, after a youth and manhood of great military vigour, began to show a strong predilection for retirement, was little calculated to control these elements of disorder; and in the royal family at this moment was to be found a man of dark character and high ambition, who was ready for any sacrifice of principle or of public duty. This was the King's second son, ROBERT EARL OF FIFE, afterwards Duke of Albany, and Regent of the kingdom. His brother, the Earl of Carrick, the eldest son of Robert II., and heir-apparent to the throne, had early manifested an unambitious disposition, which shunned the fatigue of war or the pomp of royalty; and an accident he had received from the kick of a horse incapacitated him from excelling in the exercises of his age, and increased the natural indolence of his temper. Such was exactly the person whom a proud and warlike nobility were apt to regard with contempt; and there can be little doubt that the Earl of Fife, who was next heir to the throne, had conceived the design of possessing himself of the supreme power at a very early period.

His ambition was increased by the circum-

stance that, for some years after his father's accession to the throne, the Earl of Carrick, although married, had no children. In 1373, however, the Countess of Carrick was delivered of a son, who was named David, and afterwards created Duke of Rothsay; and it may be conjectured, on probable grounds, that, as the birth of this child disappointed the hopes of the crown entertained by the Earl of Fife, it caused him to lay his plans for the removal of the obstacles which stood in his path to power, with deep dissimulation and great ability. Availing himself of the indolence of his father, and the retiring disposition of his elder brother, the Earl of Carrick, he had the art to prevail on the parliament and the monarch to devolve upon him the office of governor, and, once possessed of the supreme power, he courted the clergy and the nobility, by the most free and generous grants out of the royal revenues, by a strict and scrupulous administration of justice, where the low condition of the parties rendered him careless whether he offended or conciliated them; whilst he held a loose and indulgent rein over the higher ranks of the feudal barons, upon whose good opinion he was well aware that much of his success depended. At the time when Albany was intrusted with the supreme administration of the state, Robert II. who had now reached the advanced age of seventy-four, was fast sinking under his mortal illness; and he did not survive this imprudent act for many months, expiring at Dundonald, one of his northern castles, in the year 1389.[1]

[1] Wynton, vol. ii. p. 349.

The Earl of Carrick immediately succeeded to the throne, under the title of Robert III.; and, as if anxious to facilitate the ambitious schemes of his brother, the Earl of Fife, he shrunk at once from all active participation in the cares of royalty, and weakly devolved upon this unprincipled man the whole management of the state, with the title and authority of Governor of the Kingdom. It may be easily imagined, he was not slow to avail himself of the advantages which he now enjoyed. Although he had reached the mature age of fifty, he possessed the robust constitution and the vigour of a far younger man: his numerous sons were grown up to manhood; his brother, the Earl of Buchan, from his fierce and warlike habits known by the name of the Wolf of Badenoch, kept in awe the whole of the north: he was connected by marriage with the families of Douglas, Ross, Argyle, Fleming, Lorn, and Keith; he possessed the extensive earldoms of Menteith and Fife; and, besides the office of Governor of the Kingdom, he was Great Chamberlain, a dignity which gave him the command of the revenues of the country.

On his accession to the supreme power, the King, who buried himself in deep seclusion, appears to have treated his brother with unlimited confidence; but, although possessed of sufficient influence to gratify the most ambitious taste, the ultimate designs of the Governor upon the crown were thwarted by an unexpected event. Hitherto the single life of the Duke of Rothsay had stood between him and the throne; but, in 1394, the Queen was delivered at Dumfermline of

her second son, James, afterwards James the First; an event which was welcomed with much joy by the friends of the indolent monarch, who regarded with suspicion the excessive power committed to the Governor. Having conducted the reader to the period of the birth of this young prince, the intention of this historical introduction is completed.

JAMES THE FIRST.

THE Earl of Fife, as we have seen, was possessed of almost supreme power, and had undoubtedly formed designs upon the crown, when the birth of Prince James placed a new obstacle in the path of his ambition; but the life of an infant is precarious, and the disposition of the Governor was too bold and sanguine, to be thus deterred from prosecuting his schemes of treachery.

At this moment his chief perplexities arose out of the conduct of the heir-apparent, David Duke of Rothsay. On the accession of his father to the throne, the Duke was nothing more than a sprightly youth; but as he grew up to manhood, his character exhibited a singular combination of energy, extravagance, and licentiousness. Gay, thoughtless, and devoted to pleasure, yet evincing, even in the midst of his most reckless indulgences, a bold and ambitious spirit, the moral features of the Duke of Rothsay are not dissimilar to those of Henry V. at the same age. Of this energy and ambition he soon gave a decided specimen. Too haughty and imperious to permit the government to be quietly resigned by his

royal father into the hands of his uncle, when he felt himself, as heir-apparent, entitled to be at the head of the administration, he had the address, although scarcely out of the period of youth, to compel the retirement of the Earl of Fife from the office of Governor, and to procure his own nomination in his place, under the condition that he should act by the advice of a council, of whom his uncle Fife was the principal.[1]

It was at this time that the great revolution took place in England, which concluded in the deposition of Richard II., and the assumption of the royal dignity by Henry of Lancaster, known, from that time, by the name of Henry IV. By the Scottish nation, and by the Regent Albany, this revolution was received with very different feelings. By Albany, the solemn deposition of a hereditary monarch for malversation in his government, the alteration of the line of succession, and the alleged right of the people to confer the crown upon a stranger, were principles which so completely coincided with his own schemes of ambition, that they produced between him and the new monarch of England a cordiality of feeling which became soon very apparent. It was at this moment that the recklessness and misgovernment of Rothsay, the youthful heir to the Scottish crown, had reached their height; and it was not unnatural for a crafty politician, like Albany, to conclude that the scheme of revolution and deposition, which had prospered so well in England, might be repeated with equal success in his own country. These feelings,

1. MS. Record of Parliament in 1398.

however, were confined to himself: by the people of Scotland the intelligence of Richard's expulsion from the throne, and of the assumption of royal authority by one of his subjects, was received with a general burst of indignation; and the new doctrines by which Henry of Lancaster awkwardly attempted to mix up something of a legitimate title to the crown, with the principle that Richard had forfeited his royal rights by his invasions of the law, were received with unfeigned astonishment. The whole transaction by which Henry possessed himself of the supreme power was considered a nefarious usurpation; and so deeply was it resented by Rothsay, who was now at the head of the government of the kingdom, that he determined upon an immediate renewal of the war; and, in his letters to the French King, accused the Earl of Lancaster as the chief of traitors.[1]

At this moment an extraordinary event took place. Not long after the deposition and subsequent imprisonment of Richard II., it was publicly rumoured in England that he had made his escape from his confinement; and, after a short interval, a person in the disguise of a poor traveller was discovered lurking in one of the Western Isles of Scotland, who was recognised and accosted as the King by a sister of Donald Lord of the Isles, to whom Richard had been known in Ireland. The stranger, whose mind seemed unsettled, denied that he was the King; and, seated in mean apparel at the kitchen fire of the castle, where he had taken refuge, would fain have

[1] MS. Record of Parliament in 1398.

escaped notice; but he was detained, though treated with kindness. He was then sent to Lord Montgomery, by whom the person of the late monarch was well known, and by this nobleman carried to the court of Robert III., who received him with distinction. It has been already mentioned that Robert, at this period, lived in great retirement; having completely secluded himself from all concern in the management of his kingdom, which was intrusted to his son, the Duke of Rothsay, and his brother Albany. Terror lest he should be delivered into the hands of his enemies, and a wild and unsettled intellect, were the predominant features in the mind of this unfortunate individual; but, restored to confidence by the friendly assurances of the Scottish King, and the seclusion of the royal establishment, he remained with Robert, by whom he was treated with the distinction and the sympathy which were due to his misfortunes. As was to be expected, however, the reception of the fugitive, and the remarkable circumstances attending his escape, could not be long concealed; and Henry IV., alarmed by the frequent reports which were spread through his kingdom, "that the late King Richard was alive in Scotland," openly and boldly asserted that the person thus usurping the name of that monarch was an impostor. Subsequent discoveries of authentic and contemporary documents have established the fact, that, on the death of the King, the same mysterious person was received and acknowledged by Albany, the Regent, as Richard King of England; that he was detained at his

court in a sort of honourable captivity, and supported, during the remainder of his life, at the public expense; that he lived and died in the palace of Stirling; and was buried with the name, the state, and the honours of Richard King of England. A more extraordinary example of the melancholy vicissitudes of human grandeur is scarcely to be found in history.

In the mean time, Henry IV., a prince of calm and sagacious judgment, took the most prompt and judicious measures to avert the complicated dangers with which he was surrounded. It was given out that Richard had died in prison; and a solemn and public funeral service was enacted, at which Henry and his nobles attended; during which, a body enveloped in royal robes, and with a portion of the face uncovered, was exposed to the people. It was reported, however, at the time, that this was the body of Maudlin, a priest, who had been beheaded a short time before, and whose features exactly resembled King Richard's; and so unconvincing was the effect of the pageant upon the public mind, that it was immediately succeeded by still stronger and more reiterated reports of the escape of the King, and his honourable reception in Scotland.[1] Henry now made himself acquainted with the state of affairs in that country: aware of the ambitious schemes of Albany to get possession of the supreme power, he at once saw how he might avail himself of the assistance of this unprincipled noble: he opened up a correspondence at the same time with the

[1] Historical Remarks on the Death of Richard the Second; in the History of Scotland, vol. iii. p. 356.

Earl of March, who, having been lately insulted by the conduct of the Duke of Rothsay, had fled to England; and he sent a safe-conduct for Donald of the Isles and his brother, whom he must have been anxious to examine regarding the escape of Richard, requesting them to repair immediately to his presence. He then issued his writs for the muster of his military vassals; and, at the head of a large army, proceeded against Scotland in person.[1] But the manner in which the campaign was conducted, evinced that it was rather intended as an expedition of discovery, and of communication with the Duke of Albany, than a serious invasion. He, indeed, summoned Robert III. in terms which rather excited ridicule than indignation, to repair to his presence, and, along with his nobility, to acknowledge him as his liege lord; whilst the Duke of Rothsay, then governor of the country, sent Henry a challenge, offering to engage him in personal combat, with three hundred, two hundred, or one hundred nobles on each side. This cartel the English monarch wisely evaded; and, advancing to Leith, laid siege to the Castle of Edinburgh, which was defended by Rothsay.

At this moment, Albany, who commanded a numerous force, advanced, as it was believed, to raise the siege; but on reaching Calder Moor, within such an easy distance from the capital that a communication could be opened with the English, his army halted, a total cessation of hostilities took place, and, in a few days, the

[1] Rymer's Fœdera, vol. viii. pp. 131. 146. 149. 154.

English monarch unexpectedly raised the siege, and retired quietly to his own dominions. It is stated by a contemporary historian, that all hostilities were interrupted on account of some deep accusations and suspicions which had broken out between Albany and the Duke of Rothsay. What took place at this time between the crafty politician and the usurper of the English crown cannot be stated upon any certain evidence. That Henry IV. had engaged to forward and assist his schemes for possessing himself of the crown; and that, in return, this Scottish noble, who could boast of an influence in the state almost equal to that of his brother the King, or his nephew the heir-apparent, had engaged to use every means for the secret detention of Richard in Scotland;—is a supposition which the mutual circumstances in which they were placed renders extremely probable. Robert III., however, under whose protection the unfortunate object of Henry's fear and enmity was placed, generally resided at a distance from the capital, in some one of his northern castles; and the Duke of Rothsay, the governor of the kingdom, had, we may believe, espoused his quarrel so far as there could be any hope entertained of the restoration of an unfortunate monarch, whose heart seemed broken, and his wits so unsettled, that, in his distraction, he denied that he was the King. For Henry, therefore, to recover possession of his person was impossible; and, indeed, it may be doubted whether it was not a more prudent step to endeavour to procure his certain detention in Scotland, or to

have him made away with altogether, rather than again incur the odium and the risk of his imprisonment in England.

These proceedings took place in the month of August, 1400; and it appears that Albany continued his secret correspondence with Henry during the course of the subsequent year, which was marked by an atrocious event, — the murder of the heir-apparent to the throne. Rothsay, we have seen, was governor of the kingdom; but, unfortunately, his impatience of control and love of pleasure and of power proved too strong for his prudence; and repeated acts of riot, thoughtlessness, and contempt of the laws, gave his enemies a handle against him.[1] He had disgusted the Earl of March, one of the most powerful noblemen in the kingdom, by breaking off an intended marriage with his daughter, to ally himself to the house of Douglas; he had alienated from himself the affections of this great family, by neglecting his wife; he had affronted, and turned from a friend into a bitter enemy, Sir John Ramorgny, one of his own suite, whom he had admitted to a dangerous familiarity as the companion of his pleasures, and who, under the disguise of a refined exterior, concealed some of the darkest features in the feudal character, — hate, unforgiveness, and a recklessness of human life in pursuing the purposes of revenge.

Thus was Rothsay thrown open to the machinations of Albany, and this unprincipled man hastened to throw his deadly meshes around him in such a way as to render escape almost

[1] Fordun, vol. ii p. 431.

impossible. His excesses were exaggerated to the King his father, by whom he was warmly beloved: it was represented by Albany, with expressions of affected regret, that, under the influence and encouragement of the Prince's example, tumult and violence showed themselves openly in the land; and that some restraint was absolutely necessary to be imposed upon the youthful governor, to prevent the whole machinery of the state from falling to pieces.

Believing all this, for which, although much exaggerated, there was some little foundation, the weak and fond monarch shed tears over the delinquencies of his son, and empowered Albany to suspend him from his high office, and subject him to a temporary confinement, till he had repented of his follies, and evinced symptoms of amendment.[1] These orders his uncle was not slow to execute; and Rothsay was now in the hands of one in whose path of ambition he had long been a hateful impediment. He was seized, hurried to Falkland Castle, and thrust into a dungeon, with every circumstance of insult and cruelty. After a short time, it was publicly stated that he had died of a dysentery; his body was carried from the Castle, and interred at Lindores, a neighbouring monastery; and Albany, although loudly accused by the voice of the people as the murderer of the Prince, resumed his power, and impudently demanded a public trial. He was acquitted, as it was to be expected, by a jury of his own creatures; but, not content with this, he procured a formal remission to be

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 431.

drawn out, acquitting him, and his associate the Earl of Douglas, of all concern in the murder, in terms which are conclusive of their guilt.[1]

By degrees, from the accomplices whom they had employed, and the witnesses who were on the spot, the true particulars of the horrid transaction came to be known. The young Prince, riding with a small retinue towards St. Andrew's, was waylaid by Sir John Ramorgny, and first carried to the castle of the Bishop of St. Andrew's, where Albany and Douglas soon after arrived, with a strong escort of soldiers. Accosting him with great rudeness and insult, they threw him on a sorry horse, and hurried him to Falkland, where they cast him into a dungeon. He was here intrusted to the charge of two ruffians, named Wright and Selkirk, who had orders to starve him to death. These wretches, however, found it a tedious process; and the looks of the Prince, which did not indicate the rapid emaciation they expected, excited their suspicions. It was at last discovered that he was secretly supplied with food by a poor woman, who, in passing through the palace garden, had been attracted by his groans, and had found means to support his life by thin cakes, which she slid into the grated window, and, as is said, by her own milk conveyed through a reed to the captive. She was watched by his ruthless keepers, detected, and put to death; and, after fifteen days, the body of the miserable victim was found, in a state too shocking to be described; which made it evident that, in the last extremities

[1] Haile's Remarks on History of Scotland, chap. vi.

of hunger, he had gnawed and torn his own flesh. It presents us with a dreadful picture of the manners of the times, that an act of such cold-blooded atrocity, committed upon the person of the heir-apparent to the throne, excited little indignation in the minds of the nobility, whose interests Albany, by the indulgent profusion of his administration, had artfully rendered coincident with his own; and as for the great body of the nation, those who lived near the spot soon forgot the crime, and those at a distance never heard of its perpetration.[1]

There were two individuals, however, on whom the blow made an impression which was never effaced, — the old King, and his only remaining son, Prince James, then a boy of eight years of age. Upon the monarch, who was deeply attached to the Duke of Rothsay, so severe was the effect, that it is said to have nearly broken his heart. He refused to be comforted; yet, too weak and irresolute to adopt the measures necessary for bringing the offenders to justice, he continued Albany in his power. James, on the other hand, although still a boy, was at that susceptible age, when the grief of his father, and the murder of his brother, as it was recounted by those who surrounded him, was calculated to excite his utmost pity and indignation. The ruthlessness and barbarity of the circumstances were dwelt upon by the few faithful and attached servants who waited on the aged monarch; and pity for his helplessness and his misfortunes was naturally mingled with execrations upon the

[1] Buchanan, b. x. c. 10.

successful ambition of which he was the passive victim. All this was seen and heard by James; and there is strong reason to believe that, even at that tender age, he conceived a purpose of vengeance against his uncle Albany, and every one connected with him, which was never forgotten till the period arrived when he could gratify it to the utmost.

Fears, however, for the life of his only remaining son were now predominant in the bosom of the King his father; and, unable to watch over his safety or his education, with the active vigilance which was undoubtedly necessary, he committed the charge of the Prince to Henry Wardlaw, Bishop of St. Andrew's; a prelate remarkable for his integrity and loyalty, and celebrated in the history of Scottish literature for his classical attainments, and a generous patronage of men of letters. Under his care the heir to the throne was placed; whilst the friends of the monarch, disgusted at the atrocious conduct of Albany, accused him loudly, first, of the betrayal of the national honour and interest to England; and, when he found that Henry IV. had failed in making himself master of the person of Rothsay, of having, in the basest manner, got rid of all opposition by his murder.

To check these dangerous murmurs, Albany made a sacrifice to the opinion of a party which was getting too strong for him, and gave his consent to a renewal of the war with England; but the calamitous defeat of the Scots by the celebrated Hotspur, in the battle of Homeldon[1], atoned

[1] Fought September 14. 1402.

for the honour lost at Otterburn, and placed the flower of the Scottish nobility captives in the hands of Henry IV The leaders, Murdoch Earl of Fife, eldest son to the Governor Albany, and the Earl of Douglas, along with eighty knights, and a crowd of esquires and pages, were taken prisoners, whilst some men of note and bravery were left dead upon the field. Amongst those slain, as well as in the list of the captives, were many of that party which supported the venerable King and his son Prince James against the encroaching power of Albany; so that the defeat had an unfavourable influence upon their interests.

It is a singular circumstance, that the English monarch, upon hearing of the victory, and becoming aware of the rank and number of the captives, with much speed and urgency directed his letters to Henry Percy and the Earl of Northumberland, commanding them, "for certain weighty causes," not to admit to ransom any of their Scottish prisoners, or suffer them, under any parole or pretext whatever, to be at liberty, until they should receive instructions from the King. Such interference was unusual and unprecedented: it went to deprive two of the most powerful men in the kingdom of an undoubted feudal right, which belonged to the lowest soldier; and so indignantly was it received by Hotspur, that it is enumerated by historians as one of the causes of his and his father's subsequent alienation from Henry.[1] No satisfactory account of the motives which actuated the English monarch in this

[1] Rymer, Fœdera, vol. viii. p. 278.

mysterious and unpopular order has ever been given: but the explanation is to be found, perhaps, in his conviction that Richard II. was still alive in Scotland; and that either he might be amongst the captives, or that others were there who could inform him of his history, and in whose detention, therefore, Henry was deeply interested. This is rendered the more probable, as, about three months before this, the English King had published a proclamation[1] against those who falsely asserted that Richard was then alive in Scotland, in which he assumes it as very probable that his enemies of that kingdom, when they invade his dominions, may bring along with them some counterfeit person, whose features resemble those of the late King Richard, for the purpose of deceiving his subjects, and exciting trouble in the country.

Almost immediately after the battle of Homeldon, the Percies, completely estranged from the monarch whom they had themselves placed upon the throne, began to organise that famous rebellion which terminated with the defeat and death of Hotspur in the battle of Shrewsbury. The party of the Percies was strong in England; it was joined by Owen Glendower in Wales; and secretly supported by the Earl of Douglas, Sir Robert Stewart, and the greater proportion of the Scottish prisoners taken in the battle of Homeldon: but it was necessary to have a pretext for the assembling and concentrating their army; and this was easily found in pretending an invasion of Scotland.

[1] Rymer, vol. iv. p. 261. June 5. 1402.

Percy, accordingly, along with the Earl of March, who was not aware of the conspiracy, advanced at the head of a large army towards the borders; but he had scarcely left his own territories in Northumberland, and proceeded for a few miles into Scotland, when the host was commanded to halt before the tower of Cocklaws, an insignificant border strength[1], whose garrison could not possibly have annoyed them, and the capture or destruction of which ought to have been a matter of indifference. The spectacle of a powerful army arrested in its progress by so trifling an impediment, might have opened Henry's eyes, and convinced him that the Percies had other objects in view than an invasion of Scotland; but for a moment his sagacity, as well as that of March, who continued true to his interest, was deceived. The mummery, indeed, which took place before the tower of Cocklaws, was well acted, and does not seem to have been detected by any of our historians; although, without adverting to it, the subsequent events are inexplicable. John Gledstanes, the proprietor of the little fortalice, was in the tower at the time, but kept himself concealed from the English army, whilst he secretly met with Percy, who, as it appears by the result, employed him to communicate with Albany the governor; and Greenlaw, the officer who commanded the tower, offered to capitulate, if before the end of six weeks he was not relieved by the Scottish army. A written agreement was drawn up to this effect,

[1] Fordun, vol ii p. 437. "Tantilla turris."

and the whole English force retired from Cocklaws.

Gledstanes now issued from his concealment; and, travelling with all speed, repaired to the King of Scotland, whom he found in Buchan. The secret object of Percy in this negotiation, could be none other than to induce the King or the Governor to join him in his daring attempt to depose Henry IV., and for this purpose to lead an army into England, under the pretext of relieving the fortalice of Cocklaws. On the arrival of the messenger, Robert, with his usual aversion to business, referred the whole matter to Albany; recommending him to summon a parliament, and deliberate what course was best to be adopted in so arduous a matter.

To Albany, accordingly, Gledstanes repaired; and a graphic account of the proceedings of the Scottish governor has been transmitted by Bower, who was a contemporary. On receiving the communication, he seemed thunderstruck; talked generally of the folly of the offer to capitulate; and commanded the envoy to assure the garrison that he would raise the siege, and proceed against Percy, before the stipulated day.[1] As there was little time to summon a parliament, he assembled the principal of the nobility, explained the circumstances, and advised an immediate expedition into England, with the object of relieving Cocklaws. The astonishment of the Scottish barons was extreme. They had severely blamed the Go-

[1] If not relieved by the King of Scotland, or the Governor at the head of his army, before the 1st of August, 1403. — Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 437.

vernor for his pusillanimous inactivity in the former campaign, when, at the head of a numerous army, and in the near presence of the English monarch, who had laid siege to Edinburgh, he had shamefully declined all hostilities, and had manifested the utmost indifference, although the heir to the throne and the principal fortress of the kingdom were ready to fall into the hands of the enemy: and now that Gledstanes and his little fortalice were threatened by the English, he talked of risking a battle. "All were of opinion," says Bower, "without a single dissentient voice, that upon so trivial an occasion it would be absurd to peril the welfare of the kingdom: but Albany was a master in dissimulation: he affected to be deeply moved; and, starting up, and pointing to his page, who held his horse at a little distance, 'You, my lords,' said he, 'may sit still at home; but I vow to God and Saint Fillan that I shall be at Cocklaws on the appointed day, though no one but Pate Kinbuck, the boy yonder, should accompany me.'"[1]

It does not give us a high opinion of the penetration of the Scottish nobles, to find that this piece of acting completely deceived them: some even hailed the warlike resolution of the Governor with tears of joy; and, to use the expressions of the historian, "never did men more joyfully proceed to a feast, than they to collect their vassals." An army was instantly assembled, and the Duke, at the head of fifty thousand horse, and nearly an equal number of infantry, advanced to the

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 437.

borders. The expedition, however, ended in as ridiculous a manner as it had begun. On the march, a messenger arrived from England, who was instantly admitted to a private interview with the Governor: he brought the intelligence of the defeat and death of Hotspur in the fatal battle of Shrewsbury, and the entire dissipation of that powerful conspiracy which had threatened to hurl Henry IV. from the throne. Albany, however, pushed forward to Cocklaws, surrounded the fortalice with his troops, caused it to be proclaimed by a herald that the adversaries against whom they had proceeded had been utterly defeated, and immediately commenced his retreat into Scotland.

In all these important and curious transactions, which are unknown to our general historians, the mutual motives which regulated the conduct of Hotspur and of Albany are easily discernible. To Percy it was an object of the highest consequence to secure the co-operation of the Scots in his great rebellion, which was planned with much ability, and only developed too early by that fearless and precipitate courage which seldom took time to examine the obstacles which opposed his ambition. To Albany, on the other hand, the decision, whether he was to continue the friend of Henry, or to become the ally of the Percies, was of no little difficulty. Against Henry there was a great array of strength—the power and the name of Hotspur and his father, the alliance of Glendower and the Welsh, the co-operation of Douglas and the Scots. To oppose this, however, Henry was at the head of a powerful army, was pos-

sessed of great vigour and promptitude, of much ability both as a warrior and a politician; and he acted by the advice of the Scottish Earl of March, an excellent soldier, and a sagacious politician. Under these circumstances, Albany put himself at the head of his army, and gave out that he was marching against Percy; but his real determination was to temporise; and he had the address to delay his advance till the issue of the battle of Shrewsbury convinced him that his wisest course of policy was to continue in a firm alliance with Henry. To promote the wishes of this able monarch, by suppressing all attempts at hostility with England, and to further the schemes of his own ambition by getting possession of the person of Prince James, who on the death of the King was the only impediment which stood between him and the supreme power, were the principles which now regulated the whole policy of Albany. These became soon apparent; and the friends of the feeble and aged King, alarmed for the safety of the Prince, and warned by the dreadful fate of his brother, secretly resolved to send him to France, where, at the court of Charles VI., he might remain in security, and pursue his education.

James had now reached the age of fourteen: his studies had been conducted under the eye of Henry Wardlaw, the Bishop of St. Andrew's; and some of the most loyal of the nobility and barons, amongst whom the principal were Sinclair Earl of Orkney, and Sir David Fleming of Cumbernauld, superintended his instruction in the martial and athletic exercises of the age. Although still a

boy, he began to give indications of those excellent talents, and that unusual firmness of character, which afterwards so eminently distinguished him; and the representations of the few attached servants by whom he was surrounded did not fail, we may believe, to point out, in the strongest manner, the tyranny of Albany his uncle, the dreadful fate of his brother the Duke of Rothsay, and the unjust usurpation of all authority in the state by the Governor and his creatures. There were other events also passing before him, which could not fail to make some impression on the mind even of a boy. The existence of a mysterious personage, who lived under his father's protection; who, although he completely secluded himself from the world, was believed, by a large proportion of those best able to judge in both kingdoms, to be Richard II. — and as such was treated with the state and honour due to royalty;— the rebellion and death of Hotspur, the flight of his father, the once powerful Earl of Northumberland, into Scotland; and the intrigues of his uncle Albany to seize upon this unfortunate nobleman, and deliver him up to Henry IV.; — all these important events took place during the boyhood of the Prince; and it now became necessary for him to leave his aged father, and seek his safety, from the troubles and intrigues with which he was surrounded, in a foreign land.[1] France, however, was a country which had been the ancient ally of

[1] "Be preve counsele and ordinance
Deliver'd to send his sone in France."
Wynton, vol. ii. p. 412.

Scotland; and its court, the most distinguished in Europe, offered great advantages as a school of education for a youth of his high rank; whilst, at home, all was insecure. The preparations for his departure were therefore hurried forward with speed and secresy; yet the plot could not be effectually concealed from the Governor, who, preferring to effect that by the hand of another, which might have excited too much odium had he attempted it himself, sent private instructions to Henry IV. to intercept the Prince upon his passage. Such, at least, seems the most probable account of the transaction which followed.

The young Prince, accompanied by the Earl of Orkney, Sir David Fleming, and a strong party of the barons of Lothian, took his progress to North Berwick, and embarked at the Bass. Orkney and a small train of attendants accompanied him upon his voyage, whilst Fleming and his friends, after having seen their royal charge safe on board, returned to shore. But a cruel fate awaited both parties. It had reached Albany's ears that Fleming had revealed to the Earl of Northumberland and Lord Bardolph, who were then fugitives in Scotland, a plot for their being apprehended, and delivered up to Henry IV., to which the Governor of Scotland was a principal party; and this offence, with his loyal interference for the safety of Prince James, was regarded with the utmost indignation. Fleming, on his return from superintending the Prince's embarkation, had reached, with his small retinue, the moor of Langhermandston, when he was beset by a party led by Douglas of Balvainy, an adhe-

rent of the Duke of Albany, and, after a desperate resistance, cruelly slain. On the succeeding day a melancholy procession was seen moving through the streets of the capital, in the midst of which was carried the body of this brave knight, justly celebrated for his loyalty; but the populace, and the small party who supported the King, did not dare to rise against the superior power of Albany; and this atrocious outrage passed over without investigation.

Whilst his faithful friend was thus murdered, the young Prince continued his voyage; and, on approaching the coast of Norfolk, their vessel unfortunately fell in with a squadron of armed merchantmen, commanded by John Jolyff, and belonging to the port of Clay.[1] Unmindful of the truce between the two countries, and following either the commands of their master or the dictates of their own avarice, they immediately made prize of the ship which bore the Prince, took him and his attendants prisoners, and transmitted an account of their success to the King.

This capture of the Prince took place in the time of truce[2], and was evidently perpetrated in flagrant violation of the law of nations; but Henry, in the prosecution of his designs, was little accustomed to annoy himself with punctilios of this kind. He at once discerned the power

[1] Walsingham, Ypodigma Neustriæ, p. 375. Rymer, Fœdera, vol. viii. p. 451.

[2] The capture of James seems to have taken place on the 12th of April, 1405; that is, the beginning of the year 1405.—Wynton, vol. ii. p. 520. Notes, Chalmers's Poetic Remains of the Scottish Kings, p. 3.

over the affairs of Scotland, which the possession of so important a prize threw into his hands; and he availed himself of it without hesitation. When James was carried before him, and the Earl of Orkney remonstrated against the outrage, declaring that the mission to France was entirely of a pacific nature, and with the object of having the education of the youthful heir to the crown carried on at the court of France; "As the event has happened," said the English monarch, "my brother of Scotland ought not to be disappointed. If he wished the boy to be instructed in French, I am a tolerable proficient in the language; and he could not have fallen into better hands." This was a poor witticism to atone for so manifest an act of injustice as the seizure of the only son of the King of Scotland in time of truce; and Henry soon showed that he meant rigorously to avail himself of his good fortune; for, although treated with much outward courtesy and respect, the Prince was immediately shut up in the castle of Pevensey[2], on the coast of Sussex. Along with him were seized his protector, the Earl of Orkney, young Sir Alexander Seton, who accompanied him, and his esquire, William Gifford. It is a singular proof of the unjustifiable policy of the English monarch, that, although negotiations were immediately opened for the liberation of Orkney, Henry preserved a profound silence regarding his possession of the Prince.

1 Walsingham, p. 375.

2 Pevensey, evidently, of which Sir John Pelham, afterwards appointed tutor to the Prince, was then constable.—Rymer, vol. viii. p. 343.

That the seizure of James was a preconcerted plan between Albany and Henry, can scarcely be doubted. Shortly previous to the time of the Prince's embarkation, a private conference took place between the King of England and Murdoch Earl of Fife, Albany's eldest son: this secret meeting was also attended by the Earl of Douglas, Albany's great supporter; and by four Scottish knights of high rank, who had been made prisoners at the battle of Homeldon. These persons then repaired to Scotland on their parole; and Henry appointed his son, Thomas Earl of Lancaster, high admiral, with minute directions to have his fleet in readiness, and to cruise upon the coasts. The Prince of Scotland soon after set sail: he was captured by an armed vessel, during a truce, and imprisoned; whilst, of so an extraordinary an event, no intimation is transmitted by the English government; and, in consequence of it, no complaint or remonstrance appears to have been presented by Albany. When these facts are considered in connection with Albany's designs upon the crown, his murder of the Duke of Rothsay, and his evident interest to remove Prince James out of the path of his ambition, it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the English monarch had received information from this crafty and unprincipled statesman of James's intended voyage, and that they had concerted a plan for the seizure of his person, which proved successful. This inference, accordingly, has not escaped the acuteness of my venerable grandfather, in his "Dissertation on the Life of James the First," although some of the

original documents, which increase the probability of its truth, had eluded his research.

The account of the captivity of his only son was at first received by the aged King with loud and poignant expressions of sorrow, which gradually sunk into profound and uncomplaining melancholy. It is affirmed, indeed, by an ancient historian, that he died on the very day he received the melancholy intelligence [1]; but this is an error. There can be no doubt, however, that he was heart-broken by the event; and, without a struggle resigning the little portion of regal authority which he had retained, into the hands of his ambitious brother, he retired to Rothsay, in Bute, where he died within a year after; and, by a singular coincidence, on the very day on which, in the preceding year, his son had been made a captive.

Upon the death of the King, a parliament assembled at Perth, in which James was acknowledged and proclaimed King, by the title of James I.; and his uncle, the Duke of Albany, confirmed in his office of regent, or governor of the kingdom. At this time, says Wynton [2], the King was detained in England against his will; so that it was impossible for him to assume his regal insignia,

> "As crown, sceptre, swerd and ryng,
> Sic as afferis [3] til a Kyng."

It is extraordinary, however, that in this parliament no notice appears to have been taken of

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 439.
[2] Wynton, vol. ii. p. 417. [3] Belongs.

the captivity of the monarch, no remonstrance presented against the violation of the truce which had been perpetrated by Henry, and no ambassadors appointed to open a negotiation for his immediate restoration to his kingdom and his people. Afraid to outrage the feelings of the country, Albany permitted him to be proclaimed King; but, too powerful and too ambitious to renounce his authority, or to see it diminished by the presence of a superior, he determined that he should remain a prisoner in England.

Upon the death of Robert III., another singular event took place. The mysterious stranger, who had been acknowledged by this benevolent monarch as Richard II., and for the last four years had lived under his protection, was transferred to the care of Albany; received with respect and kindness; supported by the Governor, at the public expense, in the palace of Stirling; and the sums expended upon his maintenance entered in the accounts of the high chamberlain as money defrayed for the maintenance of Richard King of England.[1]

Although the English monarch had thus unjustifiably made himself master of the young Prince, it is affirmed, by both Scottish and English historians that he spared no pains in providing for him the best masters, and bestowing upon him an education worthy of his high rank. Sir John de Pelham, constable of the castle of Pevensey, to which the youthful and royal captive was conducted, happened to be a man of

[1] Historical Remarks on the Death of Richard the Second. Hist. of Scotland, vol. iii.

note both as a statesman and a warrior. He had served in the French wars, and, attaching himself to the fortunes of Henry IV., had risen into high favour and confidence with his sovereign. To his charge the monarch intrusted the keeping of the prince whom he had detained, and under his roof and personal inspection was his education conducted. If the character of the master under whom we have been initiated into our first studies exercises an important influence over the future disposition, much more does that of the governor of whose family we become a member, and in whose household for successive years our early life has been spent. Of Pelham, although his intimate connection with James I. has hitherto been overlooked, some interesting particulars may, even at this remote period, be collected; and Henry IV., in his choice of such a governor for his royal prisoner, made some reparation for the injustice by which he was detained.

This baron was descended from a brave and distinguished father, who was one of the captors of the French King at the battle of Poictiers, and for his valour had been chosen squire of the body to John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster. The old knight afterwards procured the same honour to be conferred on his only son, the governor of the Scottish Prince. Both the Pelhams, therefore, belonged to the household of John of Gaunt, the friend and patron of Chaucer, and illustrious, in these dark and warlike times, as the encourager of the early literature of his country; nor is it to give too much weight to conjecture, if we infer that they must have imbibed, from a constant at-

tendance upon their patron, something of a congenial love of letters. It appears that the Constable of Pevensey, at an early period, became a favourite follower of Henry Bolingbroke, Earl of Derby, eldest son to John of Gaunt, afterwards King of England. He attended him in his services abroad, and accompanied him in his banishment from England, leaving his castle at Pevensey to the charge of the Lady Joan, his wife, a noble and spirited matron. When the abuses in the government of Richard II. induced Henry to undertake his famous expedition, which ended in the deposition of that monarch, Pelham accompanied him, and was one of the fifteen lances who landed at Ravenspur, in Yorkshire. On the 4th of July, 1399, when Pelham, at this time, shared with his master the cares and the dangers of the enterprise, his castle of Pevensey was besieged by his enemies, and bravely defended by his lady; who, like Black Agnes of Dunbar, divided their efforts, and repulsed them from the walls. An original letter of this warlike matron, addressed to her lord during the continuance of the siege, has been preserved: it is distinguished by much modesty and affection.[1]

[1] "My dere Lord,

"I recommande me to your hie lordeschip with hert and body, and al my poore myghte; and wyth all this I thank zow as my dere lorde, derest and best yloved of all erthlyche lordes. I say for me, and thanke yhow, my dere lord, wyth all this that I say before, off youre comfortable lettre that ye sent me from Poumfreite, that com to me on Mary Magdaleyn day; for by my trowth I was never so glad as when I herd by your lettre that ye warr stronge ynogh, with the grace of God, for to kepe yow fro the malice of your

This noble lady was a daughter of Sir John Escures, Knight; and, although in her unaffected love and devotion to her "high and dear lord," she scarcely allows herself to notice the siege of the castle, and her successful defence, yet her services were publicly acknowledged and rewarded by King Henry: her husband was, on his coronation, created a Knight of the Bath; and the privilege of carrying the royal sword before the King was conferred upon him by a royal patent for the term of his life. On all occasions, indeed, Henry appears to have manifested for Pelham a high esteem and consideration. He appointed him his treasurer at war, and his chief butler in all the ports of Sussex; and, as the latest proof of his confidence, he no-

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ennemys. And, dere lord, if it lyk to your hye lordeschip that als soon as ye myeht, that I myght her of your gracious spede, whyche God Almychty contynue and encresse. And, my dere lord, iff it lyk zow for to know of my fare, I am here bylaid in manner of a sege, with the Countc of Sussex, Surray, and a grete pareyll of Kentte, so that I may nocht out, nor none vitayles gette me, bot with myche hard. Wharfore, my dere, if it lyk zow, by the awyse of zour wyse counsell, for to sett remedye of the salvation of yhour castell, and withstand the malyce of ther scheres forsayde: and also that ye be fullyche enformed of there gret malyse wyrkers, in these schyres, whyche yt haffes so dispytfully wrogth to zow, and to zour castell, to yhour men, and to zour tenauntes: for this cuntree have yai wastede for a gret whyle. Fare well, my dere lorde, the Holy Trynyte zow kepe fro zour enemys, and soon send me good tythings off yhow. Ywryten at Pevensay, in the Castell, on Saint Jacob day last past, by yhour awnn poore

"J. PELHAM."

"To my trew Lorde."

minated him one of his executors. The attachment of Henry IV. to Sir John Pelham was countenanced by his popularity with other illustrious persons. He was the friend and correspondent of John I., King of Portugal, the intimate companion and the executor of Thomas Duke of Clarence; and, upon the death of the King, he rose into equal consideration under Henry V., his illustrious son and successor.

It is evident, therefore, that, laying aside the injustice of his detention, James was fortunate in being placed under the care, and becoming a member of, the household of Sir John Pelham. He had just reached the age of eleven years, when the young candidate for knighthood was usually taken out of the hands of the women to whom his infancy and extreme boyhood had been intrusted, and when it was thought proper for him to commence his education in earnest. It was at this age that the parents selected some veteran and able soldier of noble family, under whose roof their son was placed, and in whose castle, commencing his services in the capacity of a page, he received his instruction in the exercises and accomplishments befitting his condition. Thus Edward the Black Prince delivered his young son Richard, afterwards Richard II., to Sir Guiscard d'Angle as his military tutor; esteeming him one of the most experienced and distinguished knights in his service. We read also that Henry IV. intrusted the education of his son Henry, afterwards the great Henry V., to Sir Thomas Percy, a brave and veteran warrior, afterwards Earl of Worcester;

and on the same principle the English King, although, for reasons of state, he determined to retain the King of Scotland in his own hands, generously selected for him a military governor, whose character was a guarantee for his being brought up in a manner suitable to his royal rank.

It was soon seen that the pupil was not unworthy of the master. In all athletic and manly exercises, in the use of his weapons, in his skill in horsemanship, his speed in running, his strength and dexterity as a wrestler, his firm and fair aim as a jouster and tourneyer, the young King is allowed by all contemporary writers to have arrived at a pitch of excellence which left most of the competitors of his own age behind him; and, as he advanced to maturity, his figure, although not so tall as to be majestic or imposing, was, from its make, peculiarly adapted for excellence in such accomplishments. His chest was broad and full, his arms somewhat long and muscular, his flanks thin and spare, and his limbs beautifully formed; so as to combine elegance and lightness with strength. In throwing the hammer, and propelling, or, to use the Scottish phrase, "putting" the stone, and in skill in archery, we have the testimony of an ancient chronicler, that none in his own dominions could surpass him; so that the Constable of Pevensey appears to have done ample justice to his youthful charge.

But this formed only one division of his education. To skill in these warlike exercises, every youthful candidate for honour and for knighthood was expected to unite a variety of more pacific

and elegant accomplishments, which were intended to render him a delightful companion in the hall, as the others were calculated to make him a formidable enemy in the field. The science of music, both instrumental and vocal; the composition and recitation of ballads, roundelays, and other minor pieces of poetry; an acquaintance with the romances and the writings of the popular poets of the times; were all essential branches in the system of education which was then adopted in the castle of every feudal chief; and from Pelham, who had himself been brought up as the squire of the Duke of Lancaster, we may be confident that the Scottish King received every advantage which could be conferred by skilful instructors, and by the most ample opportunities of cultivation and improvement. Such lessons and exhibitions, however, might have been thrown away upon many; but James had been born with those natural capacities which fitted him to excel in them. He possessed a fine and correct musical ear; a voice which was rich, flexible, and sufficiently powerful for chamber music; and an enthusiastic delight in the art, which, unless controlled by strong good sense, and a feeling of the higher destinies to which he was called, might have led to a dangerous devotion to it. The peril of such over-cultivation of this fascinating art does not appear to have been so common in those days as in our own. The brave and accomplished military leader, Sir John Chandos, sang sweetly, and solaced his master, Edward III., on a voyage, by his ballads; the same veteran soldier did not think himself demeaned by introducing

a new German dance into England; and the Count de Foix frequently requested his secretaries, in the intervals of severer occupation, to recreate themselves by chanting songs and roundelays.[1]

Cut off for a long and tedious period from his crown and his people, James could afford to spend many hours in each tedious day of his captivity in the cultivation of accomplishments to which, under other circumstances, it would have been criminal to have given up so much of his time. And this will easily account for that high musical excellence to which he undoubtedly attained, and will explain the great variety of instruments upon which he performed. Besides, to use the words of a learned and amusing writer, it is well known that "music constituted a part of the quadrivium, a branch of their system of education, and it was more or less cultivated by persons of all conditions;—churchmen studied it by profession; and the students at the Inns of Court learned singing and all kinds of music. Richard II. understood something of the practical part of it; for, on the day of his departure for Ireland, he assisted at divine service, with the canons of St. George, and chanted a collect. An old annalist, enumerating the qualifications of Henry IV., describes him as of shining talents in music [*in musica micans*]; whilst Stow says of Henry V., "he delighted in songs, meeters, and musical instruments."[2] These examples appear amply sufficient to defend King James from any

1 Archæologia, vol. xx. p. 59.
2 Ibid. pp. 60, 61.

imputation of over-refinement or effeminacy in the cultivation of an art which was the favourite amusement of such monarchs as Henry IV. and his illustrious son.

But during the leisure which was afforded by his tedious captivity, it is certain that James applied himself to severer studies than either his military exercises or his cultivation of music. He was acquainted with the Latin language, as far, at least, as was permitted by the rude and barbarous condition in which it existed previous to the revival of letters. In theology, oratory, and grammar, in the civil and the canon laws, he was instructed by the best masters; and an acquaintance with Norman French was necessarily acquired at a court, and amongst a people, where it was still currently spoken, and highly cultivated. Devoted, however, as he was to these pursuits, James appears to have given his mind with a still stronger bias to the study of English poetry, choosing Chaucer and Gower for his masters in the art, and entering with the utmost ardour into the great object of the first of these illustrious men, — the improvement of the English language, the production of easy and natural rhymes, and the refinement of poetical numbers, from the rude compositions which had preceded him.[1] In the concluding stanza of the King's Quair, a work composed by the Scottish King shortly before his return to his kingdom, he apostrophises Gower and Chaucer as his dear masters, who sat upon the highest steps of rhetoric, and whose genius as poets, orators, and

[1] Ellis's Specimens, vol. i. p. 205.

moralists, entitled them to receive the most exalted honour.

> Unto the hymnis of my maisteris dere,
>   Gowere and Chaucere, that on steppis satt
> Of rhetorick, quhill thai war lyvand here,
>   Superlative as poets laureate,
>   In moralitee and eloquence ornate,
> I recommend my buik in lynis seven,
> And eke their saulis unto the blisse of hevin.

Whilst the royal prisoner was thus usefully and diligently employing the years of his captivity in the improvement of his intellectual faculties, the course of public events in his own kingdom, and in England, was little calculated to hold out any prospect of his speedy enlargement. It was the evident interest of Albany to detain him in England, whilst in his stead he held the supreme authority; and, although designated by the name of Governor, he was in every other respect the King of Scotland. To attach to himself a numerous party of the nobility, and to enrich and strengthen his own immediate relations and dependants, the patrimony of the crown was invaded and dilapidated; the lands, castles, and palaces, which were the hereditary possessions of the royal family, were presented to strangers and nobles, who gave in return their support to the usurpation and excesses of their benefactor; and the laws were overlooked or perverted in favour of powerful litigants, who trampled with impunity upon the rights of the middle classes, and retained their dependants and servants in a state of grievous thraldom.

But although Albany, insecure upon the un-

easy elevation to which he had been raised by his ambition, did not dare to control the higher feudal barons in their oppression of their vassals, he artfully endeavoured to cultivate the affection of the body of the people, where this could be effected without danger to himself. In a parliament held at Perth, a general tax of two pennies upon every hearth in the kingdom was proposed to be levied, for the purpose of defraying some particular public work. This the Governor steadily and successfully opposed. During the whole course of his connection with the state, he declared that no such tax ever had been or ever should be levied; observing, that all who ventured to propose it deserved the maledictions of the poor: the royal customs, he contended, were fully adequate to defray the sum, and out of them, accordingly, it was advanced; whilst a liberality, which cost him nothing, was repaid by a great accession of popularity.

In the mean time, the pacific relations with England were preserved, although occasionally interrupted by the warlike spirit of the borderers, and by that jealousy of a friendly intercourse with France, which Albany was sedulous to maintain, for the purpose of having an indirect influence over the politics of Henry. No one could be more solicitous than the English monarch to maintain a lasting and sincere peace both with France and Scotland. His throne was perpetually shaken by conspiracies, all of them more or less connected with the belief that Richard II. was yet alive in Scotland: his utmost efforts, repeated from year to year with additional severity, were

ineffectual in restraining the idea that the mysterious stranger who had been transferred from the late monarch to Albany, was none other than the King whom he had deposed: and although he seems sedulously to have avoided all attempts to get possession of this person, he ardently cultivated the friendship of the Scottish governor; promoted the commercial intercourse between the two nations; and, well aware that the return of the youthful King to his dominions was an event especially dreaded by his uncle, he opposed, for the present, every attempt by the loyal party in Scotland for negotiating his deliverance. Ample time, therefore, was given to James for the further prosecution of those studies in which he had already arrived at a high pitch of excellence; and whilst Albany retained in an honourable but strict captivity his real or ideal Richard, and Henry held fast hold of the person of the Scottish monarch, both countries, under the government of the able usurpers who had risen into power, remained at peace with each other.

It was at this period, when the misery and the ravages of war had ceased for a short interval, that the doctrines of Wickliff made their first appearance in Scotland,—that the flame of religious persecution and martyrdom was first kindled in the heart of the country. In England, under the reign of Henry IV., it is well known that the sect of the Lollards, which professed the doctrines of Wickliff, and inveighed against the abuses of the Church of Rome, had increased with a rapidity which threw the Holy See into

a state of great alarm. This extraordinary man, who seems to have been raised up by Providence to prepare the way for the future progress of the Reformation, attacked with indefatigable perseverance and great ability the leading errors of the Roman Catholic creed. By his multifarious writings, his daily discourses to the people, and, above all, by his translation of the Holy Scriptures into the English tongue, he promoted a spirit of enquiry and discussion, which, appealing to the written word of God as the only foundation of Christian faith, led to an examination of the whole fabric of the Romish religion, which detected its errors, exposed the presumptuous claims to infallibility advanced by the Pope, and treated with unmeasured severity its assumption of temporal as well as spiritual authority over the whole Christian world.

It would be a mistake, indeed, to consider Wickliff as the first great propagator of what the Romish church calls heresy; for the more closely we examine the history of the Christian religion throughout that long succession of centuries which has elapsed since the first preaching of our Saviour, the more shall we be convinced that there was, in every age, an under-current of reformation working its way, though silently and slowly, beneath the foundations of that great fabric of spiritual error, and latterly of temporal dominion, which was erected by the Roman pontiffs. In no age did the truth want its witnesses, although their voice was drowned in the thunders of the Vatican, and their writings composed in a language unknown to the people, and confined to

a small circle of learned and pious disciples, soon sunk into neglect. Even in the case of Wickliff, had the invention of printing preceded the birth of the Reformer, the effects of his opinions might have been infinitely more fatal to the Romish church; but, deprived of this mighty engine, his works and translations of the Scriptures, although eagerly sought after, could possess but a very limited circulation; and, after his death, his disciples were persecuted by the church, and scattered into different countries.

One of these, whose name was John Resby, an English priest, made his way into Scotland soon after the accession of Albany to the government; and, animated by a zeal for the propagation of the truth, began openly to publish his opinions. For a while he appears to have been overlooked; but the boldness and the novelty of his doctrines awakened, at last, the jealousy of the Scottish church, whilst their truth made a manifest impression upon the people. In consequence of this, he was seized by Laurence of Lindores, an eminent doctor in theology, and compelled to defend his opinions before a council of the clergy, in which this inquisitor presided. He was here accused of maintaining forty pernicious heresies, the principal of which were a denial of the spiritual and temporal authority of the Pope as the successor of St. Peter; a declaration of the inutility of formal penances and auricular confession; and an assertion that a holy life was absolutely indispensable in any person who presumed to call himself the vicar of Christ.[1] These

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. pp. 442, 443.

opinions were attempted to be confuted at great length by Laurence of Lindores; and the arguments which Resby advanced in their support having made little impression upon the ecclesiastical judges before whose tribunal he was arraigned, the brave and virtuous disciple of the truth was condemned to the flames, and immediately delivered over to the secular arm.

Albany, the governor, was at this moment anxious to consolidate his power by every possible means; and it was not to be expected that a man of his principles would neglect an opportunity like the present for attaching to himself the great and influential body of the Catholic clergy. He at once professed a horror for so pestilent a heresy, affected the utmost zeal to preserve the doctrinal purity of the Church, and gave orders for the execution of the delinquent. Resby was accordingly dragged to the stake and burnt at Perth, in the year 1405.[1] His books and little pamphlets, which he had disseminated amongst the people, were consumed in the same fire with their master; but the inevitable effects of persecution for religious belief soon appeared in the increased zeal and affection which were evinced for those opinions which their author had not scrupled to canonise with his blood. Such of his books as had escaped the search of the Church were piously concealed and more diligently studied by his disciples: afraid to talk openly of his opinions, they met, and read, and prayed in secret; and we shall soon see that the

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 441.

doctrines which were propagated by this proto-martyr of the reformed faith in Scotland remained secretly cherished in the hearts of his followers, and, after a few years, reappeared with a spirit of more determined and enthusiastic proselytism.

It was not long after this, that an event occurred which demonstrated the disorganised state of the country during the administration of Albany, and the frail tenure by which its northern division was held under allegiance to the crown. We allude to the great rebellion of the Lord of the Isles; a political convulsion, which, arising at first from a small beginning, threatened in its progress to dismember the kingdom. The ancient Earldom of Ross, comprehending a district, which in extent was equal to a little principality, had fallen to a female, the Lady Euphemia Ross, who was married to Sir Walter Lesley. By this marriage there were two children, Alexander and Margaret. Alexander married a daughter of the Governor Albany, and became Earl of Ross, but died, leaving an only daughter, who took the veil; whilst Margaret, his sister, became wife of Donald Lord of the Isles. The nun, however, before renouncing the world, was prevailed upon to resign the Earldom of Ross in favour of her uncle, the Earl of Buchan, Albany's brother, and a man whose ferocious disposition had procured him, even in those days of rapine and plunder, the expressive surname of the Wolf of Badenoch. This destination was haughtily challenged by Donald of the Isles, who contended that Euphemia was civilly

dead, and could not legally dispose of her inheritance, which clearly belonged to his wife, Margaret, and consequently to him as her husband. Under other circumstances, Albany would have hesitated to incense so powerful an enemy as the Island Chief; but the resentment of his impetuous brother was equally formidable, and the solemn award of the Governor pronounced the claim of Donald unjust, and the property of the Earldom to belong to Buchan. The Island Prince replied to this by levying an army of ten thousand men, collecting a fleet from the maritime principalities which owned his superiority, and entering into a treaty with England; and Albany, who had been unsuccessful in preventing the borderers from breaking out into acts of hostility, saw himself threatened with war on both sides of the kingdom.[1]

The northern invasion, however, was by far the most formidable; and such was the rapidity with which Donald of the Isles completed his preparations, that the Governor was scarcely made aware of his intentions, when the next messenger brought him an account that the fires of the highland army were blazing in the heart of Ross, and that the Earldom which had been the subject of dispute, promised soon to be reduced to a blackened desert. Sweeping onwards, the invader was encountered at Dingwall by Angus Dhu, or Black Angus, a connection and dependant of Buchan; but the effort was unavailing, for, after a fierce struggle, this chieftain was made prisoner, his brother slain, and his little army

1 Fordun, vol. ii. p. 444.

almost entirely cut to pieces. Donald now recruited his army, and sent his summons throughout the neighbouring districts, impressing the whole fighting population into his service; and, with renewed fierceness and havoc, taking his progress through the fertile province of Moray, he pushed forward into Strathbolgy, and from thence advanced into the heart of Garvyach, upon which he let loose his utmost wrath. Here, however, he had reached the territory of his deadly enemy, the Earl of Mar, whose reputation as a military commander, acquired in constant service both at home and abroad, was of the highest order; and who, indignant at the temerity of a barbarian chief presuming to lead his horde of naked ketherans into the heart of Scotland, declared that he would meet him at the head of a handful of knights, and disperse his undisciplined horde with the but-ends of their lances. Mar, who was a natural son of the Earl of Buchan by some Highland mistress, had been himself a ketheran leader in his youth; and his experience of their numbers and ferocity might have convinced him that this was an idle boast; but he determined to put his threat in execution; and, enraged at the havoc committed upon his own dominion of Garvyach, hastily collected a small force, consisting of the knights and gentry of Angus, and the Mearns, which, as he advanced, was strengthened by the power of Mar and Garvyach.[1]

Donald's camp-fires were now seen upon the banks of the Don, and the wealthy citizens of Aberdeen, who had heard his threat, that he

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 445.

would make Scotland a desert to the shores of the Tay, began to tremble in their booths; but these were the days when the merchant had his sword and his steel cap hung up behind the counter; and Sir Robert Davidson, their provost, soon welcomed and joined Mar at the head of a strong body of burgesses, ranged under the banner of their city. This little army pushed forward from Aberdeen to Inverary, and came in sight of the highlanders at the village of the Harlaw, situated on the stream called the Ury, not far from its junction with the Don.

The highlanders were more than ten thousand strong, their leaders only bearing defensive armour, whilst the soldiers were almost naked, but armed, after the fashion of their country, with swords, poleaxes, bows and arrows, short knives, or daggers, and round shields, formed of wood, covered with strong hide, and fastened with bosses of brass or iron. The chivalry of Mar, on the other hand, were clothed in complete steel; many rode horses which were barbed, that is, had their heads, chests, and flanks, defended by armour; and all, in the confidence of certain victory, considered a single knight as no unequal match for a score of ketherans. The result, however, far from justified this opinion: an immediate impression was, indeed, made by the first charge of the advanced division, or vaward, of the lowlanders, which, led by Sir James Scrimgeour, constable of Dundee, plunged, with their levelled spears, into the great body of the highlanders, and cutting their passage through the middle mass, strewed the ground with multitudes of their enemies. This suc-

cessful attack was soon followed by a more furious assault from Mar upon another part of the highland army, which he drove back with immense slaughter; but although the ketherans gave way for a short season, their natural courage soon regained its ground, and their great superiority in numbers enabled them to close in upon the small columns of the lowlanders; who, encumbered by the slain, and pent in by the living mass which yelled and fought around them, began to faint under such distress, and to fall beneath the ghastly wounds inflicted by the axes and short knives of their opponents. With these they stabbed or hamstrung the horses, pulling the riders from their seat by the steel hooks which formed the back part of their Lochaber axes, springing up behind them with the agility and fierceness of the wild-cat, seizing them by the throat, or grasping them round the body, and tearing and biting after a savage and unnatural fashion, which disgusted the civilised warriors of the south. In this dreadful species of combat Mar gradually lost the bravest of his men. The Constable of Dundee, the Sheriff of Angus, and George Ogilvy, his eldest son, were slain. The chief leaders of the Irvings, Maules, Abernethys, Lovels, and Straitons, including the flower of the gentry of Buchan and Angus, shared their fate. Lesley of Balquhain, an aged baron of noble lineage, lay dead upon the field, with six sons slain beside him; and Mar found himself, in the evening of the day which had been occupied in this dreadful contest, surrounded by a small

body of survivors, most of them wounded, feeble with fatigue and loss of blood, and scarcely able to continue the battle till nightfall, which, at last, put an end to the struggle. When morning broke, it was discovered that the Island Lord had retreated by the hill of Benochie, checked, undoubtedly, by the battle, but convinced that a small accession of numbers would have enabled him to have cut the lowland army to pieces; whilst Mar, though he passed the night upon the field, and justly claimed the victory, found himself utterly unable to pursue, and obliged to fall back upon Aberdeen. Davidson, the sheriff, with the greater part of the stalwart burgesses who accompanied him, were left dead upon the field; but the banner of the town, torn and soiled with blood, was saved from the gripe of the ketherans, and is still shown in that ancient city.[1]

The battle of Harlaw made a deep impression upon the national mind. In a general council, or parliament, held immediately afterwards by Albany, the minor heirs of all who had fallen were permitted immediately to enter into possession of their estates, without being subjected to the usual feudal fine; a cairn, where Irving of Drum is said to have been slain by the hand of Eachin Rusidth, or Red Hector, was long shown upon the field; and a loch, or mountain lake, is still pointed out, which lay in the way of the retreat of the highlanders, and into which, in their anxiety to expedite their movements, they threw in the little stone hand-mills which

1 Fordun, a Hearne, p. 1177.

they carried in their wallets for grinding their corn as they passed through the country.[1]

Albany, who was now seized with an uncommon fit of warlike exertion,—increased, in all probability, by his anxiety that the earldom of Ross should remain in the hands of his son, the Earl of Buchan,—collected an army, and, marching in person to Dingwall, took possession of the castle, and drove the Lord of the Isles into the remotest recesses of his dominions. The intervention of the winter protracted the struggle for a short period, but summer brought a renewal of hostilities; and the Island Prince, unable to

[1] As late as the time of Drummond of Hawthornden, a march known by the name of the Battle of Harlaw continued to be a popular air; and a ballad still exists, probably founded on a contemporary poem, which describes, in some spirited lines, the march of the hosts, and the shock of their encounter: —

"To hinder this proud enterprise,
The stout and mighty Erl of Mar,
With all his men in arms did rise,
Even frae Curgarff to Craigyvar;
And down the side of Don right far,
Angus and Mearns did all convene
To fecht — or Donald cam sae nar
The ryall burgh of Abirdene.
With him the brave Lord Ogilvy,
Of Angus sheriff principall;
The Constabil of gude Dundee
The vanguard led before them all.
Suppose in number they were small,
Thai first right bauldlie did pursue,
And made thair faes before them fall
Quha then that race did sairly rew."

Laing's Early Metrical Tales, p. 228.

make head against the royal army, was compelled to renounce all claim to the earldom, to become a vassal to the Scottish crown, and to give hostages for his future peaceable behaviour.[1] The Earl of Mar, to whose resistance of the highland invasion the country was under deep obligations, had an extraordinary history. He was the natural son of the Earl of Buchan, the brother of the late King, known by the name of the Wolf of Badenoch, and distinguished himself in early life by a ferocity which rivalled his father, ravaging the country at the head of a band of robbers, and subsisting upon open rapine. Casting his eyes upon the principality of Mar, which was at that time the property of Sir Malcolm Drummond, brother of the late Queen Annabella, who had married Isabella Countess of Mar, he is said to have become master of it in a manner which gives a shocking picture of the lawlessness of feudal times. Drummond, a noble but somewhat aged baron, was suddenly attacked and overpowered in his castle of Kildrummie, by a band of highland ruffians, who shut him up in one of his own dungeons, where he died from neglect or starvation. Of this inhuman murder, committed on the person of the King's uncle, Mar was more than suspected; yet, in the face of this dark imputation, he suddenly appeared before the castle, at the head of a strong body of ketherans, stormed it in open day, and, possessing himself of the person of the Countess, compelled her, by persuasion or by violence, to become his wife. The public voice loudly called

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 445.

for vengeance, accusing him of rape and murder; but he replied to the charge in a remarkable manner. He appeared before the gates of the castle, where he was met by the Countess, to whom, with great solemnity, and every expression of devoted obedience, he surrendered the keys of her own mansion. The lady then, in presence of her assembled tenantry and vassals, holding the keys in her hands, and calling on the Bishop of Ross, who stood by, to witness the transaction, declared that she chose Alexander Stewart for her husband, and gave him, as a marriage gift, the castle of Kildrummie, with the earldom of Mar, and all thereto belonging. Stewart immediately assumed the title of Earl of Mar, and Lord of Garvyach; and the aged King, Robert III., or rather the governor, Albany, ratified, by the royal charter, a transaction as flagrant and atrocious as any to be found in history.[1] The sudden change wrought by such success upon the character of Mar was not the least extraordinary part of this story of savage ambition. From a fierce and unprincipled highland freebooter, he became, if we may believe contemporary writers, an able and accomplished statesman, and a distinguished military leader. He served in the wars of the Duke of Burgundy, and gained renown on the Continent, not only as a soldier, but a naval adventurer; and, on his return to Scotland, he so successfully turned his arms against the haughty highland lords who disturbed the peace of the realm, that the charge of the whole of the north was committed to him; so that

[1] Haile's Sutherland Case, cap. v. § 11.

he became the scourge and terror of the very robbers amongst whom he had received his education. We are not to wonder, then, that, in fighting against him at Harlaw, the islemen and the ketherans were animated by an unusual rancour; uniting their common hatred of the Saxons to their detestation of a renegade, who, they declared, had been fostered in their bosom only to sting and to destroy them.

Whilst such was the course of events in Scotland, year after year passed on, and Albany firmly retained in his hand the supreme power of the state, without a single attempt having been made to procure the restoration of the King. No remonstrance had been addressed to Henry, although the laws of nations were violated in his detention; no parliament had been called, in which so important a subject was submitted to the consideration of the estates: in the public transactions between the two countries, the name of the King appears to have been sunk by the mutual consent of Henry and Albany; and the existence of the monarch is only proved by some public papers, which inform us that he had been removed from Pevensey to the Tower, and from the Tower to Nottingham Castle, in 1407. Such flagrant conduct on the part of Albany was rendered more conspicuous by his repeated and anxious negotiations for the return of his eldest son, Murdoch, who had remained a prisoner in England since the battle of Homeldon, and into whose hands he hoped to transmit his usurped dominion, admonished by the infirmities of age that his own tenure might be of short continuance.

His schemes, however, were suddenly interrupted by the death of Henry IV. and the accession of a new monarch to the throne of England. This event seemed, in its first effects, to threaten the Scottish King with a more rigorous captivity than he had yet experienced, and to crown with undeserved success the ambitious designs of Albany. The late King died on the 20th of March; and on the succeeding day his successor, Henry V., gave directions that James, with his faithful esquire and attendant, William Gifford, should be again shut up in the Tower. This continued restraint must have been the more galling, as repeated attempts to procure his restoration to liberty were made by the King himself, and the party of the Scottish nobles who were inimical to the usurpation of Albany. The able and crafty politician, however, perpetually succeeded in rendering abortive every negotiation which contemplated the return of the monarch to his dominions; and, whilst James was occasionally treated with great generosity and distinction, and even permitted to hold an intercourse with his friends who came to visit him in England, it was evident that Henry considered him as too important a hostage in controlling the designs and ensuring the fidelity of Albany, to part with upon easy terms.

The political sagacity of this conduct was soon rendered apparent by an extraordinary conspiracy which was discovered in 1415, when Henry was on the eve of invading France. Its real object seems to have been no less than the restoration of Richard II., affirmed to be then alive in Scot-

land, to his rightful throne; and its principal authors were Richard Earl of Cambridge, cousin to Henry V., and Henry Lord Scroop of Masham.[1] The Scottish associates of this conspiracy consisted of the party opposed to Albany, who were anxious for the restoration of their sovereign to his dominions; and the immediate effect of its discovery was to promote a secret negotiation between Albany and the English King, by which the one agreed to retain under his power the person believed to be King Richard, and the other to detain the Scottish King in captivity.

The success of the Scottish governor did not rest here; within a short time after the discovery of the conspiracy, he obtained permission that Henry Percy, the son of Hotspur, who since the battle of Shrewsbury had remained in Scotland, should return to England; whilst his son Murdoch was liberated from the Tower, and restored to his native country. We may easily conceive the deep indignation of the Scottish monarch, now in his nineteenth year, when he felt that the same unworthy hand which had murdered his brother, and expelled him from the throne, was employed in riveting his fetters in a foreign

1 It is undoubtedly true, that in the public documents relating to this mysterious plot, which it must be remembered were manufactured under the eye of Henry, the Earl of Cambridge is made to declare, that "the man, whom the Scots call King Richard, is dead;" whilst he asserts that the intention of the conspirators was to raise Edmund Earl of March to the throne: but the first assertion was contradicted by the conduct of the conspirators, and the second by the policy of the King. — See History of Scotland, vol. iii. p. 379.

prison, whilst it opened the door to the hated person for whom it destined his hereditary sceptre. But James was to endure yet deeper mortification: every effort to regain his liberty had failed; his attempt to revisit Scotland upon his parole, and the delivery of hostages for his return, was defeated by the same malign influence which had interrupted all other negotiations; and at last, on the 3d of September, 1419, his uncle Albany, to whose ambition the fairest prospects of his life had been sacrificed, expired at the Castle of Stirling, in his eightieth year. So effectually had he secured the interest of the ruling party in the state, that his son, Duke Murdoch, silently indeed, and without the intervention or sanction of a parliament, yet without opposition, succeeded to the supreme authority, and by a bold and manifest act of treason assumed the name and office of Governor of Scotland.[1]

The disposition of Murdoch, however, was in every respect the opposite of his father: weak, feeble, and irresolute, it was soon apparent that the dangerous elevation was thrust upon him by an ambitious party rather than chosen by himself; whilst his rightful sovereign, increasing every day in vigour of character, and developing those high intellectual qualities which afterwards distinguished him, heard of the elevation of Murdoch with deep indignation; and with the utmost energy and perseverance again renewed his efforts to procure his liberty.

An event, however, occurred about this time,

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. pp. 466, 467.

which rendered his detention in England more tolerable, and sweetened the irksomeness of captivity. Jane Beaufort, the daughter of the Earl of Somerset, a lady of exquisite beauty and high accomplishments, was accidentally seen by the royal prisoner, who became enamoured of her. We learn from his own elegant and unaffected testimony, that the first moment he beheld this "fresh and fairest flower in the arbour of the garden at Windsor," his heart willingly and in an instant became the seat of the most ardent and delicate love. Nor is it at all extraordinary that the passion should have been mutual. A youthful and a captive monarch, universally reputed the most accomplished prince of his time, was not the sort of lover whom ladies permit to die of despair; and the romantic tinge of misfortune and separation which must have mingled with their passion, as it increased the difficulties which stood in the way of their union, enhanced the ardour of their affection. From her birth and her connections the lady was of distinguished lineage, and even royal rank. Her father, the Earl of Somerset, now dead, was the son of John of Gaunt, and uncle to Henry V. Her mother, Margaret, daughter of Holland Earl of Kent, had taken to her second husband, Thomas Duke of Clarence, the brother of the King, and at this moment Regent of France. Her brother, John Duke of Somerset, had gained high renown in the French wars; and her uncle was the able, potent, and opulent Cardinal of Winchester.[1] To

[1] Bankes's Extinct and Dormant Peerage, vol. iii. p. 666. Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, vol. iii. pp. 14. 30. 127.

possess himself of this mistress of his affections, and to recover and share with her that crown of which he had been so long and so unjustly deprived, became now an all engrossing object to the King; but an occurrence which soon after took place, whilst it prolonged, by its influence upon the politics of Henry, his detention in England, gave for a short season a new direction to his destiny.

During the lifetime of Albany, the French Dauphin had in vain importuned his ancient allies, the Scots, to grant him some effectual assistance against the English monarch; and Henry had evidently purchased this abstinence from all interference, which was far from agreeable to the general wishes of the Scottish nobility, by a secret agreement with Albany to detain the Scottish King in captivity. This, rather than the want of military ability, affords the true explanation of the pitiful issue of all the warlike expeditions of the Governor, which, in conformity to the desire of the nation, he was sometimes compelled to undertake, but which terminated either in a speedy armistice, or an unnecessary retreat. After his death, however, or at least when he lay sick of his mortal illness, and it was evident his government was drawing to a close, the Duke of Vendôme arrived at the Scottish court, with an earnest request that the Scots would assist their ancient allies; and, as the feeble character of Murdoch was unable to resist the general wishes of the nobility, it was determined in a parliament that a large auxiliary force should be embarked for France, under the command of Sir John

Stewart, Earl of Buchan, second son of the Regent Albany.[1]

Aware of this intended hostility, Henry V., under the idea that the presence of their sovereign in the camp of their enemy would prevent the Scots from assisting the Dauphin, or, at least, neutralise their efforts, determined to carry James along with him to his French wars. It is stated by the English historians, that the Scottish King, when Henry proposed to him that he should charge his subjects on their allegiance to desist from war, replied, that so long as he continued a prisoner, and acted under the will of another, it neither became him to issue nor them to obey such an order. But he added, that to win the prize of chivalry, and to become instructed in the art of war under so illustrious a master, was an opportunity which he willingly embraced. The mother of that lady on whom the young monarch had fixed his affections was now in France, with her husband, the Duke of Clarence; her brother, the Duke of Somerset, was one of Henry's bravest captains; and to share in the dangers and the renown of war was the surest way to recommend himself in the eyes of his mistress. James, accordingly, accompanied by a select band of Scottish nobles and gentlemen, accompanied Henry, in the character not of allies, but of individual knights, who fought for the "love of honour, and for the honour of love," to use a phrase of Sir Philip Sidney's. Of the particulars of his life at this period we possess no account. After the settlement of the peace of

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. pp. 458, 459.

Troyes, he was present at the magnificent coronation festival of Catherine of France, which took place on the 2d of June, 1420; and on the resumption of hostilities, if he did not deeply participate in the war, owing to the peculiar circumstances in which he was placed, he yet enjoyed the advantage of witnessing the military operations of a captain whose skill was then, perhaps, unrivalled in Europe. He was with the army in the camp before Melun; and, whilst engaged in the siege of this place, which was defended by the French and their allies with the utmost gallantry, Sir William Douglas, of Drumlanrig, arrived from Scotland, and, joining the party who waited on his sovereign, brought him intelligence of the state of affairs under the government of Murdoch.[1]

On the conclusion of the campaign, the English King returned with his bride to England; and afraid, perhaps, of any secret intercourse between James and the Scottish auxiliaries, who, under the command of the Earl of Buchan, had now arrived in France, he carried the young monarch along with him, and replaced him once more in his captivity at Windsor, permitting to him as much liberty as was compatible with his security. The event, however, which remanded him to his prison, restored him to the sight and the occasional society of Jane de Beaufort; and, at this period of his love and his captivity, he seems to have commenced that beautiful poem, intended as a tribute to his mistress, which, under the title of the King's Quhair, or book, describes the story

[1] Rymer, Fœdera, vol. x. p. 19.

of his life, and paints, with a pencil not unworthy of Chaucer, the depth and the delicacy of his attachment.

When engaged in these pursuits, and dividing his time between love and poetry, events of the utmost consequence occurred in France. The Earl of Buchan, at the head of seven thousand men at arms, and strengthened by a reinforcement of the troops of the Dauphin, commenced a career which, for a while, was crowned with brilliant military success. On his embarkation for England, Henry had intrusted the government of France to Thomas Duke of Clarence, his brother; and it became soon apparent that the rashness and presumption of this leader were not equal to cope with the experience and ability of the Scottish Earl. Buchan, after some inferior successes, encountered the English, led by Clarence in person, near Bauge, in Anjou, and gained a victory which, from the slaughter with which it was accompanied, almost annihilated the English army. Clarence, who had unwisely attempted to defile over a narrow bridge, in presence of the enemy, fought with the most determined bravery. Distinguished by his splendid armour, and a rich coronet of jewels, which surmounted his helmet, he was first attacked by a Scottish esquire, who shivered his lance upon him, then wounded in the face by Sir William Swinton, and at last felled to the earth and slain by the steel mace of the Earl of Buchan.[1]

In return for this service Buchan was rewarded by the Dauphin with the highest military dignity

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 461.

in the country—that of Constable of France; and Henry, alarmed by the success, hastened his instant departure from England, with the resolution of avenging the death of his brother, and retrieving the fortunes of his army.

To procure the recal of the Scottish auxiliaries, or, at least, a cessation of their hostilities, became now an object of greater consequence than ever to the English monarch; and aware of James's passion for his cousin, Jane Beaufort, and his anxiety to make her his queen, and return to his own dominions, Henry was not slow to paint in the strongest colours the impossibility of accomplishing his wishes, unless he succeeded in inducing the Earl of Buchan to withdraw from his alliance with the Dauphin; nor can it be denied that the English King had strong arguments to urge. "This Scottish Earl," said he, addressing James, "who is your subject, has already made the mother of that Jane Beaufort, whom you love, a widow; her brothers, too, are at this moment prisoners in the Scottish camp; he has slain my brother of Clarence with his own hand; and you, who are his King, and whom he is bound on his allegiance to obey, yet hesitate to exert your authority, and put an end to such daring and sanguinary hostility. Under such circumstances, is it reasonable that I should consent to the liberation of a monarch who thus obstinately makes himself my enemy, or give the hand of my cousin to one who permits his subjects to slay and imprison her nearest relations?" To this James replied, that all had arisen out of his unjust seizure and detention in England, and that it was

vain to expect that the constable, Buchan, would be disposed to obey any orders which were sent to him by a captive sovereign. "Restore me," said he, "to the liberty of which I have been deprived against the most sacred laws of nations; let me be once seated a free sovereign, surrounded by my subjects on my hereditary throne, and the proudest of them shall learn to obey me; Buchan shall be recalled, and the war shall cease. At present my subjects are entitled to consider every mandate which I direct to them as flowing, not from my own free wishes, but dictated by the King of England."

Although in no way disposed to comply with James's request to its full extent, Henry so far acceded to its justice and expediency, that he entered into a conditional agreement upon the subject. Archibald Earl of Douglas, at this time the most powerful subject in Scotland, engaged to assist the English monarch in his French war with a force of two hundred knights and squires armed at all points, and a body of two hundred mounted archers; whilst Henry promised, that, within three months after his return from his present campaign, James should be permitted to revisit his own dominions upon his parole, and for a certain period to be afterwards determined.

In the mean time, he insisted that he should again accompany him to France; and the Scottish King once more passed over into that kingdom, with a train of men at arms and domestic attendants worthy of his royal rank. The chief leaders of this body-guard which attended their sovereign were the Lords Seton and Forbes.

His private chaplain, also, William de Mirton, and two faithful esquires of the names of Blair and Winton, waited on their master[1]; whilst to these was added William Fowlis, secretary to the Earl of Douglas[2], probably with the view of corresponding with the adherents of the Earl in Scotland during the absence of his master and his sovereign in France. By his means, and by encouraging a frequent resort of his subjects through England to his presence in the camp of Henry, James maintained a communication with his own kingdom. Mirton, his chaplain, proceeded on a private mission into Scotland; and the captive sovereign became acquainted with the state of parties in that country, with the scenes of aristocratic licence and rapine which were openly permitted under the weak government of Murdoch, and the anxiety expressed by all classes of his subjects, that their rightful sovereign might at last be restored to his people.

There is ample evidence that the monarch, during his whole stay in France, was in intimate correspondence with his friends in Scotland; and Henry, aware of the talents and energetic character of the King, and anticipating the advantage which would result from his friendship with England, and his marriage with Jane de Beaufort, offered no obstacle to these negotiations. On the 8th of February, 1422, we find Seton, Lord Gordon, and William Fowlis, who had been despatched into Scotland, returning to their so-

1 Rymer, Fœdera, vol. x. pp. 153, 154. 166.

2 Ibid. vol. x. p. 230.

vereign, then in the English camp at Rouen, and procuring letters of safe conduct to repass into that country; whilst, at a later period, Fowlis is found hastening to appear before the royal council, to communicate to Henry the secret intelligence of which he had been made the depositary.[1]

During the continuance of these proceedings, the high intellectual qualities of the Scottish King were insensibly gaining an influence over all who approached him; and Henry, although he would not yet permit him to return to his dominions, treated James with much generosity: he encouraged him to look forward to the certainty of his marriage with his cousin; he pointed out in strong terms the advantages of a solid and lasting peace between the two countries; and he gave him the benefit of his advice in all matters of state, as he had already permitted him to profit by his example and instruction in war. But, in the midst of this happy and useful intercourse, a mortal distemper seized upon the English King. In vain did he struggle against it with that energy which was so inherent in his disposition. It prostrated his strength in a short time, and compelled him to follow his army in a litter. There is a striking and melancholy similarity between the circumstances attending the death of this great monarch, and that of Edward I. Weakened by disease, yet anxious to join the Duke of Burgundy on the day appointed for giving battle to the Dauphin, he made a strong effort to proceed on horseback; but was compelled to desist,

[1] Rymer, Fœdera, vol. x. pp. 174. 290.

and submitted himself to be rowed back in a boat to Vincennes. On his way thither, at Pont Chartrain, he again insisted he was able to rejoin his army, and once more mounted his horse; but, seized with intolerable pain, he was lifted off the saddle in deep dejection, and carried to the castle in a horse-litter. Edward I., visited by that compunction and remorse which so commonly invades the death-bed of conquerors, appeased the misery of his mind by the consolations arising from superstition, and appeared to enjoy a momentary tranquillity in pondering upon the crusade which he had meditated, and giving directions that his heart should be conveyed with great pomp to Jerusalem.[1] On hearing from his physicians, that he could not live more than two hours, he called for his confessor and his chaplains, received the sacrament, and requested the attendance of some of his household. He then bade them chant the seven penitential psalms. "When they came," says Monstrelet, "to 'Benigne fac Domine,' where mention is made 'muri Hierusalem,' he stopped them, and said aloud, that he had fully intended, after he had wholly subdued the realm of France, and restored it to peace, to have gone to conquer the kingdom of Jerusalem, if it had pleased his Creator to have granted him longer life. Having said this, he allowed the priests to proceed, and shortly after gave up the ghost, on the last day of August.[2]

[1] The last moments of the fifth Henry presented nearly the same scene.

[2] Monstrelet's Chronicles, by Johnes, vol. ii. p. 372.

At this melancholy season, the Scottish King, whom, since his arrival in France, Henry had constantly retained in his household, was chosen to officiate as chief mourner in the funeral procession which accompanied the remains of the late King from Paris to London. As a striking picture of the manners of the times, it may not be uninteresting to describe this grand ceremony. The royal coffin was deposited within a car, covered with black; above it was placed a bed, adorned with a coverlid of vermilion silk, interwoven with beaten gold, on which lay a figure of the deceased monarch, with a crown of gold upon his head, in his right hand a sceptre, in his left a golden ball, with his face looking to heaven. This chariot was drawn by six horses richly trapped, and bearing each a different coat of arms emblazoned on their furniture. The first carried those of St. George; the second, those of Normandy; the third, those of King Arthur; the fourth, those of St. Edward; the fifth, those of France only; the sixth, those of England and France. Then followed the Scottish King as chief mourner, accompanied by Thomas Duke of Exeter, uncle of the late King, Richard Earl of Warwick, Edmund Earl of March, Humphrey Earl of Stafford, Edmund Beaufort, and many other noble persons. The Lords Lovel, Audley, Morley, and Zouch, bore the banners of the Saints; the Baron of Dudley carried the standard, and the Earl of Longueville the banner of St. George. The achievements were borne by twelve captains; and around the chariot rode five hundred men at arms, all in

black harness, with their horses barbed in black mail, and they themselves bearing their spears reversed, the but-end pointing upwards. Besides these, on each side of the chariot went three hundred persons holding long torches, and many lords bearing banners, bannerets, and pennons. As the chariot passed through the several towns, a rich canopy was borne over it; rows of priests on each side of the coffin incessantly chanted requiems, and masses were said from daybreak till noon in every town through which the funeral passed. In this manner the cavalcade reached Abbeville; and, after resting at Hedin, Montreuil, and Boulogne, came to Calais. The Queen Dowager and her train followed at two miles' distance; and, on the 10th of November, at night, it arrived in London. Within a short way from the city, it was met by fifteen bishops in their robes, along with many mitred abbots, and a crowd of inferior ecclesiastics, who, amid the light that blazed from a thousand torches, accompanied it into the city, chanting the office for the dead, and conducted it to St. Paul's. In this cathedral his exequies were solemnised; after which the body was carried with equal pomp to Westminster Abbey, where it was interred in a little chapel, subsequently enlarged by Henry VII., and situated between the shrine of Edward the Confessor and the chapel of the Blessed Virgin.[1]

The negotiations for the return of James to his dominions had proceeded to a considerable length, when they were thus suddenly and un-

[1] Gough's Sepulchral Monuments, vol. iii. 60, 61, 62.

expectedly interrupted by the death of Henry V. The Duke of Bedford, however, who succeeded to the government of France, and the Duke of Gloucester, who became Regent of England, appear to have been animated by the most friendly dispositions towards the Scottish monarch; and, within a few months after the accession of Henry VI., Alexander Seton, Lord Gordon, Thomas Mirton, James Chaplain, and William Fowlis, the secretary to the Earl of Douglas, had a conference with the privy council of England, in which the negotiations were renewed.[1] It was determined that James should first meet at Pontefract on the 12th of May, 1423, with the Scottish ambassadors; after which they, and the ambassadors of the King of England, should settle the conditions upon which the monarch was to return to Scotland.

All this having taken place, the final treaty was concluded at London between the Scottish ambassadors, the Bishop of Glasgow, Chancellor of Scotland, and the Abbot of Balmerinoch, and certain commissaries appointed for this purpose by the English regency; — amongst whom we find the Bishop of Worcester, Stafford, Lord Treasurer of England, Lord Cromwell, Sir John Pelham, James's old governor, and Robert Waterton, Esq.

It will be recollected that the monarch had been illegally seized by the English during a period of truce, and that, although compelled to endure captivity for eighteen years, he was not a prisoner. To have insisted, therefore, for

[1] Rymer, Fœdera, vol. x. p. 266.

a ransom, would have been adding extortion to injustice; and the English commissioners, aware of this inconsistency, made their claim merely for the payment of the expenses which had been incurred in the support of their royal charge during his residence in England. This sum was fixed at 40,000*l*., to be paid in yearly sums of 10,000 merks till the whole was discharged. Twenty-one hostages, selected from the noblest and most opulent families in the country, were to be delivered into the hands of the English monarch, who agreed to remain, at their own expense, in England, till the whole sum was paid; and the four principal towns in the kingdom — Edinburgh, Perth, Dundee, and Aberdeen — engaged to become security to the English treasury for the full amount, in the event of its not being discharged by their sovereign.[1]

Preparatory to a final peace, a seven years' truce was concluded: — but this was not all. The Scottish monarch, who had loved and gained the affections of Jane de Beaufort whilst he was a captive and in the power of others, now restored to his crown and to his freedom, found himself in a condition to obtain the accomplishment of his fondest wishes; and his proposal for his immediate marriage with the daughter of the Duchess of Clarence was welcomed by the English commissioners as a probable method of conciliating the lengthened hostility which had subsisted between the two nations. Such being the mutual wishes of both parties, the preliminaries were settled without difficulty, and the marriage

[1] Rymer, vol. x. p. 299.

was concluded with much pomp and feudal solemnity in the church of St. Mary Overy, in Southwark; after which. the marriage feast was held in the palace of the bride's uncle, the famous Cardinal Beaufort, a man whose vast wealth enabled him to vie with the festivals of royalty.

Happy in the restoration of his freedom, after a captivity of eighteen years, and blessed in the possession of his "milk-white dove," to employ the beautiful expression which he himself applied to his fair mistress, James now set out, with his Queen, and an escort of the English nobility, for Scotland. He was met at Durham by a party of his own subjects, including the Earls of Lennox, Wigton, Murray, Crawford, March, Orkney, Angus, and Strathern, accompanied by the Constable and Marshal, and having a splendid train of attendants to the number of three hundred persons.[1] At the same city, the hostages for the performance of the treaty delivered themselves to the English commissioners; and whilst their sovereign continued his progress, these pledges for his fidelity were conducted to London and lodged in the Tower.[2] Surrounded by his nobles, and attended by his old playfellow, Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, the Scottish King soon passed the border, and halted on reaching the Abbey of Melrose, where, before the high altar, with his hand on the holy Gospels, he confirmed the treaty by his royal oath. Gratitude to God for his restoration, after a captivity of almost un-

[1] Rymer, vol. x. p. 309.
[2] Ibid. vol. x. p. 343.

exampled endurance, mingled with the solemn ceremony; and welcomed by the unaffected joy and acclamations of the whole body of his subjects, he hastened to Edinburgh, where he kept the festival of Easter. He then proceeded to Scone, where, on the 20th of April, was held the ceremony of his coronation. According to ancient custom, the King was first anointed and crowned by the Bishop of St. Andrew's, after which he was placed in the royal seat by the late Governor Murdoch, Duke of Albany and Earl of Fife. The Queen was next crowned; and the solemnity concluded with feast and feudal revelry, accompanied by the reiterated shouts and applauses of his people. Amidst these rejoicings, the monarch conferred the honour of knighthood upon Alexander Stewart, son of the Duke of Albany; on the Earls of March, Errol, and Crawford; Hay, of Errol, Constable of Scotland; Scrymgeour, Constable of Dundee; Alexander Seton, Lord of Gordon; and eighteen others of his principal nobility and barons: and this imposing solemnity having been concluded, he proceeded to the important and arduous task of enquiring into the condition, and rectifying the abuses, of the government.[1]

When James I. thus succeeded to the throne, from which he had been excluded for eighteen years by a course of treasonable but able policy, he had almost reached the vigour of manhood. He was in his thirtieth year; and a mind which was naturally endowed with firmness and energy, had been improved in the school of misfortune, and

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 474.

early taught the virtues of patient endurance, of perseverance under disappointment, and a cheerful concentration of his resources under reverses which would have broken any ordinary spirit. Since the moment he had changed from the boy into the youth, he had asserted the rights which had been violated in his person, had insisted that he was a free king unjustly seized in a time of truce, and entitled to return to his dominions. In combination with a small but faithful party of his nobles, who endeavoured to procure the return of their sovereign, he had laboured in repeated negotiations, extended through the period of twelve years, to obtain his liberty; but these had been baffled and defeated by the intrigues of Albany, who kept possession of the supreme power till the day of his death: James bore his disappointment with the manly courage which was inherent in his disposition; yet with the deep indignation and desire of vengeance natural to a mind of strong materials nursed up amid the feelings and prejudices of a feudal age.

Hitherto he had received contradictory or garbled accounts of the abuses of Albany's government, and the miserable and disorganized condition of the kingdom. The treasonable usurpation of the government, and his own detention in England, were offences, indeed, which needed no additional proof; and, although cautious of defeating his object by a premature disclosure of his intentions, there can be no doubt that he had resolved, the moment he possessed the opportunity, to visit the crimes of this hated house with deep and unsparing ven-

geance. But the picture of the state of the kingdom might be exaggerated; and of this he determined to judge with his own eyes before he took any steps for its redress. On one occasion, indeed, upon the journey from Durham, he is said to have been thrown off his guard by the appalling representation, which was drawn by one of his nobles, of the shocking condition of the country, the contempt of the laws, and the licentiousness of the feudal tyrants who lorded it over the people. "O God, spare me but a little," said he, "and throughout my unhappy kingdom I shall bring in a change which men little dream of. There is not the wildest spot where the key shall not keep the castle and the bracken bush the cow, though I should toil like a slave or a dog to achieve it."[1]

This, however, was either expressed in a moment of unguarded feeling, or to a confidential servant in his suite; for James at once perceived that, in the circumstances in which he was placed, caution and concealment were absolutely requisite. A premature disclosure of his plans for punishment and reformation might have led to their speedy and total defeat. Too many of the most powerful of the aristocracy had shared in the spoils and abetted the usurpation of the government of Albany, to render any plan for their defeat a matter of easy organisation or rapid accomplishment. Although the feeble Duke Murdoch had already sunk into a condition of indolent and pacific allegiance, his sons and relatives were men of fierce habits, and daring

[1] Fordun, a Goodal, vol. ii. p. 511.

ambition: they commanded a numerous band of armed and warlike vassals; they held some of the strongest castles, and inaccessible feudal strengths, in the kingdom; and, on the first open declaration of his intentions, James well knew that a force might be mustered against him, and a spirit of hostility excited, which would render it impossible to attain his object, except at the risk of a civil war. Time was necessary to concentrate his strength, — to decide on the most proper mode of attack, — to weigh the difficulties which obstructed him — and to gain over to his party the most powerful amongst the nobility.

To accomplish all this, his first object, upon his return, was to throw his enemies off their guard; and the absolute necessity of the measure reconciles us in some degree to the dissimulation by which it was effected. He allowed Murdoch, in the name and character of Governor of Scotland, to sanction the authority of the ambassadors who negotiated the treaty for his delivery; he protested not against a proceeding which excited his keenest indignation at the time, as an act of treason; he permitted the same person, on the ceremony of his coronation, to place him in the royal seat; he conferred knighthood on his son; and there can be little doubt that to himself and his party, which embraced the highest nobles in the land, he behaved with a courtesy and kindness which seemed to have forgotten alike their offences and his own misfortunes, in the universal joy and hilarity with which he was welcomed into his dominions. During his captivity, and in the various scenes of trial and

disappointment through which he had passed, James had acquired the art of suppressing his feelings, and dissembling his real motives and intentions. It is an accomplishment often painfully taught us in the school of calamity; and although a noble and generous disposition is apt to decide against it, we cannot deny that there might be circumstances in which, to a mind bred up in these feudal times, it became a duty. In such circumstances was the Scottish monarch then placed: resentment, or even coldness, would have discovered his designs and betrayed him to his enemies. Forgiveness to the family which was stained with his brother's blood, and prosperous upon the spoils of a usurpation which for eighteen years had riveted the fetters of his captivity, would have been weakness and folly according to the notion of these times: it remained only to lull his enemies into security; and this, it must be allowed, he effected with a finished dissimulation.

Whilst he encouraged them to remain around his court and person, and continued them in the offices which they held under Albany, he omitted no opportunity to inform himself secretly of their strength, he took care to acquaint himself with the readiest means of seducing them from the party of Albany; and if this appeared impossible, of at least raising up against them such enemies amongst their dependants and vassals as should enable him to neutralise, if not absolutely crush, their hostility. In the mean time, immediately after his coronation he assembled his Parliament, and, with much apparent calmness and

moderation, proceeded to enquire into the condition of the country and the administration of the government. The picture which presented itself was truly alarming. The rights and authority of the church, which former monarchs had preserved and protected from violation, had been invaded with little ceremony, and the estates of the clergy plundered and laid waste. The land was filled with swarms of tyrannic nobles, each followed by his band of inferior ruffians, who made constant war upon the people and each other; whilst against such fierce and dangerous persons the sheriffs, magistrates, and inferior officers of the realm, were unable to enforce the authority of the laws. For this state of things, the King at least attempted to give immediate redress. He restored the privileges to the clergy, — put down by positive enactment the mischievous right of private war, — abridged the armed retinue with which the nobles were permitted to ride through the country, — strengthened the hands of the civil magistrate, placing wise and responsible officers, and such as were possessed of sufficient property in the country, in the situations which he had found occupied by needy adventurers, — and punished in the severest manner not only those troops of sturdy mendicants who traversed the country, extorting by terror the charity which their prosperous profligacy rendered little needful, but those riders, or "gangars," who, belonging to the suite of the great nobles, incurred great charges at the inns and hostelries, which they seldom paid except in abuse and violence.

His own revenue, derived from the customs levied on the exportation and importation of merchandise, and those ample estates and royal castles and palaces which were the inalienable property of the crown, the King found diminished and dilapidated to an extent which reduced him to the brink of bankruptcy. Under the governmen of Albany, it had been the practice of this usurper to reward his creatures by private grants out of the property of the crown, rather than by intrenching upon his own domain, or permitting them to oppress the people. That he might be enabled to adopt the proper measures for the restoration of his royal dignity to its former influence and splendour, James instituted a strict enquiry into all claims made by the subjects upon the "great customs:" he gave directions to the sheriffs of the different counties to inform themselves of the exact extent of the crown lands within their county, which had been held by his predecessors, David II. and Robert II. and III.; and, for the payment of the 50,000 merks which were due to England, a scheme of taxation was proposed, the particulars of which, as they may be perused in "the Act of Parliament," present a curious picture of the early statistics and agriculture of the country.

Various provisions were next passed for the protection of the fisheries, the regulation of the coinage, the prevention of the exportation of bullion out of the realm, the trade to foreign parts in horses, oxen, and sheep, and the supply of England and the Continent in skins and furs, which evinced rather a vigilant attention to the

interests of trade, than an understanding of the true principles upon which its prosperity depends. There followed a primitive and minute denunciation of rookeries, on account of the injury committed upon the corn, and the Acts of this first Parliament were concluded by an injunction, "that all the King's subjects, after they had attained the age of twelve years, should provide themselves with the usual arms of an archer; and that bow-marks should be constructed, at different intervals, in every parish, where all might practise archery, under payment of a certain penalty to the lord of the land if this injunction was neglected." During his long residence in England, and in his attendance upon Henry V. in his French war, James had enjoyed the fullest opportunity of observing the superiority of the English bowmen over those of his own and all other countries. He had noted the fatal effects of this deadly weapon, and had himself, by constant practice, attained to an almost unrivalled skill in this martial accomplishment. It was not wonderful, therefore, that he should seize the first opportunity of enforcing the practice of archery amongst his people; and so seriously did the legislature consider the subject, that the practice of football, a game to which the lower classes were enthusiastically attached, was forbidden under a severe penalty, in order that all might devote themselves to that art in which they were confessedly far inferior to the yeomen of England. Yet, notwithstanding the strictest injunctions upon the subject, the efforts of the King were not attended with that success which he anticipated; and the awkwardness of

the Scottish archers, as it was exhibited at the annual games, or festivals, which James had instituted for the distribution of prizes, has furnished the monarch with the subject of that poem, which he has entitled "Peblis at the Play;" a satire admirably descriptive of ancient manners, and scarcely inferior in humour to the muse of Chaucer. Of this, however, and its contrast with the taste and delicacy of his greater poem, "The King's Quhair," we shall afterwards say a few words.

In this first Parliament of James we find the institution of those committees which sat under the name of the Lords of the Articles in full force. Immediately after the convocation of the three estates, certain persons, were selected for the determination of the various subjects or articles to be proposed to them by the Privy Council of the King; and leave of returning home was given to all other members of Parliament. It is probable that in this practice, which appears to have been first introduced in the reign of David II., James found one important means of carrying into execution his designs against the family of Albany: and having taken the precaution of selecting from the clergy, the nobles, and the commissaries of the burghs, such members as he knew would be favourable to his scheme of retributive justice, he dismissed to their castles and their estates the larger portion of his nobility, delighted with the kindness of the royal manners, and unsuspicious of the secret measures which were organising for their punishment or their destruction. Had they considered the tendency

of some of the acts passed in this Parliament,— those, for example, which instituted an enquiry into the state of the crown lands, and forbade the nobles from traversing the country with a numerous retinue of armed attendants,— they would probably have taken the alarm.

James was well aware that the higher members of the Scottish aristocracy had been long accustomed to obey and interpret such regulations as it suited their own convenience, and they little dreamt that the time had at length arrived when a perseverance in such conduct would be visited with the stern exaction of the highest penalties attached to so flagrant a crime. The King, in short, calculated upon the character of his nobility, and with great sagacity estimated the advantages which it gave him; whilst they, long accustomed to the indulgence for crime, extended to them by a lax and profligate government, and secretly despising the sovereign whom they had been in the habit of regarding as a boy brought up in a foreign country, indulged in their dream of security, and gave implicit credit to the apparent friendliness of his feelings towards them.

For eight months this able scene of royal dissimulation and aristocratical credulity was acted; and during this time James employed himself in secretly strengthening his party, in securing the assistance of the clergy, and gaining the affections of the burgesses and opulent merchants, whose loans enabled him to make an impression upon the more venal part of the nobility. Who were the King's principal advisers and assistants at this critical period does not clearly appear;

but it is probable we must look for them in the members of his privy council. Lauder, Bishop of Glasgow, and Chancellor of the kingdom; Sir Walter Ogilvy, the Treasurer; Cameron, Provost of Lincluden, and private Secretary to the King; along with that able military leader, the Earl of Mar; Forrester, of Corstorphine, the Chamberlain; Somerville, of Carnwath; Lauder, of the Bass; and Levingston, of Callender; were certainly deep in his confidence, and busy in their assistance: whilst it is evident that the monarch did not consider it safe or expedient to intrust the organisation of his plans to the higher nobility; though, when he had concentrated his strength, and felt secure of his success, he compelled them to sanction his proceedings by their names and their presence.

During the interval in which this deep-laid plot for their destruction was prepared, Duke Murdoch, the late governor, along with his sons, his uncles, and relatives, had remained upon their estates, to which they retired immediately after the dissolution of the last Parliament. Pleased with the courteous and popular manners of the King, and unsuspicious of any designs against them, no measures of security were adopted against an attack which they did not anticipate; and, in the mean time, the legislative enactments of the late Parliament had experienced the fate of all other statutes, in being either entirely neglected, or avowedly infringed.

At last, having completed his secret arrangements, the King issued his writs for the meeting of his Parliament, on the 12th of March, at

Perth; and so effectually had he succeeded in lulling all suspicion, that Duke Murdoch and his friends obeyed without hesitation. The first subject brought before the estates related to the dissemination of the opinions of the Lollards, who were gaining ground in Scotland. Inquisition into the existence of this heresy was ordered to be made by the ministers of the church, and the statutes with regard to all who had been tainted with the principles of Wickliff to be rigidly enforced.

As the administration and family of Albany had been celebrated for their orthodoxy, it was probably not without an object that these proceedings were chosen for the opening of the public business. By occupying their attention, and flattering them with the approval of the government, it kept down all suspicion, and gave time for their enemies to draw the meshes more completely around them. All was at last ready. The Parliament had sat for eight days without the slightest disturbance. The ninth presented an extraordinary spectacle: Murdoch, Duke of Albany, the late governor of the kingdom, Alexander Stewart, his youngest son, and twenty-six of the highest barons and nobles, were arrested and committed to prison. Amongst these were the three most powerful earls in Scotland— Archibald Earl of Douglas, Douglas Earl of Angus, and Dunbar Earl of March. The list included Hay of Errol, the Constable, Scrymgeour, Constable of Dundee, Hepburn of Hales, Hay of Yester, Maxwell of Caerlaverock, Alexander de Lindesay, Otterburn, secretary to the Duke of

Albany, Sir John Montgomery, Sir John Stewart of Dundonald, uncle to the King, and thirteen others. At the same time, the Earl of Lennox, father-in-law to the Duke of Albany, and Sir Robert Graham, son of Sir Patrick Graham of Dundaff, were seized, and shut up in the Castle of Dunbar; Sir Walter Stewart, Albany's eldest son, whose fierce temper had defied the authority and control of his father, was confined in the strong fortress of the Bass, belonging to Sir Robert Lauder; whilst Duke Murdoch himself was first imprisoned in the Castle of St. Andrew's, and afterwards removed to Caerlaverock.[1]

This arrest, which, by one stern and decided blow, appears to have levelled and overawed the whole body of the aristocracy, could not possibly have been effected without the command of a strong military force; and the bold measures immediately carried into execution by the King justify this assertion. Falkland Castle, the private property of the Duke, where his father had murdered the Duke of Rothsay, and Doune Castle, the chief residence of Albany, were seized, and garrisoned by the royal troops. At Doune, James found Isabella, the wife of Murdoch, whom he instantly imprisoned in Tantallan Castle; and such appears to have been the skill with which his plans were digested, and the powerful agents throughout the country, whose co-operation he had secured, that within a short period after the seizure of Albany, there was scarcely a single fortress or castle of any consequence which he had not seized.

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 481, 482.

Over the proceedings of those nobles, whose persons were in prison and their castles in the hands of the crown, it may easily be imagined that the monarch possessed an unlimited control; and so the event sufficiently demonstrated. But few who had beheld the calmness, the moderation, and the courteous amenity of the royal manners, were prepared for the dreadful scene of retributive justice and stern unpitying severity which was now exhibited before them. Immediately after the seizure of Duke Murdoch and the principal nobles, James adjourned the parliament for two months, ordaining it to re-assemble at Stirling, upon the 18th of May. In this interval, — dreadful to the unhappy victims, who now felt themselves within the grasp of the royal vengeance, and discovered, when it was too late, the refined duplicity by which they had been circumvented, — the preparations for the trial of the family of Albany were completed. In the palace of Stirling, on the 24th of May, the parliament was opened with great solemnity. Armed in the consciousness of power, the King appeared seated on his throne. He was clothed in his royal robes. He wore his crown; and, bearing the sceptre in his hand, and surrounded by his chief officers, presided as the supreme judge of his people. Walter Stewart, the eldest son of the Duke of Albany, was then brought to trial, found guilty, and led to instant execution in front of the castle. All record of the trial, or of the evidence, has, unfortunately, perished; but we know, from the expression of an ancient chronicle, that he was convicted of "robbery;" and it is probable, that

under this term may have been included the dilapidation of crown lands, and the spoliatory expeditions in which, relying on his feudal right of private war, he had indulged. His trial and execution occupied a single day; and it is a remarkable circumstance, that, amongst the twenty-six names which we find on the jury, are not a few of his own near connections, and seven of the nobles who had been arrested and imprisoned in the late parliament; a clear demonstration that James had overawed these last, by the threat of a similar fate, and compelled them to co-operate in the destruction of his enemies, as the price of their liberation.

On the following day, the Duke of Albany, Alexander Stewart, his second son, and the Earl of Lennox, father-in-law to the Duke, were tried by the same jury, and found guilty. Of the charges against Stewart and Lennox no record remains; but it may be presumed on strong grounds that the crime of Albany was his usurpation of the office of Governor; and it cannot be denied that his assumption of the supreme power, immediately after the death of his father, without the intervention or sanction of the three estates, was an act of treason. Upon this charge there could be no want of evidence; for every transaction in which he engaged, from his accession till the period of the King's return, was illegal and treasonable. He was accordingly found guilty: the same sentence was passed upon his son: the Earl of Lennox was next condemned; and, with a rapidity which left not a moment for an appeal to mercy, these noble and unfortunate

persons were led to the eminence in front of the Castle of Stirling, still known by the name of the Heading Hill, and there executed amidst an immense concourse of the people.[1] The severity of this sentence — the striking contrast which was offered between the gentleness and courtesy of the former deportment of the monarch, and the stern composure with which he selected and devoted to destruction those who had so lately been honoured with marks of the royal favour and regard, — struck an awe and terror into the great body of the aristocracy, which compelled their fear, if it did not conciliate their affection.

Amongst the people, the shedding of so much noble blood excited a sympathy and commiseration for which James was not prepared. Albany and his two sons, Walter and Alexander Stewart, were men whose appearance and manners, in a feudal age, were peculiarly fitted to command popularity. Their stature was almost gigantic; their countenances cast in the mould of manly beauty; and their air so dignified and warlike, that, when the father and the two sons ascended the scaffold, it was impossible to behold the scene without a feeling of involuntary pity and admiration. Behind them came the Earl of Lennox, a venerable nobleman in his eightieth year; and, when he laid his head upon the block, and his grey hairs were stained with blood, a thrill of horror ran through the crowd, which, in spite of the respect or terror for the royal name, broke out into expressions of indignation at the unsparing severity of the vengeance. Had the

[1] Fordun, vol. ii. p. 482, 483.

victim of James's resentment been the elder Albany, the archtraitor, who was stained with his brother's blood, and whose successful intrigues had doomed him to a captivity of eighteen years, the utmost severity of the law would not have excited any other feelings than those of approval and satisfaction; but he treasured up the wrath which ought to have fallen upon the father, and discharged it with unmitigated fury upon the children and the grandchildren: and it cannot be denied, that, making every allowance for the necessity of asserting the offended dignity of the laws, and producing before the eyes of a people too long accustomed to regard them with contempt a memorable example of inflexible justice, there was yet a cruelty in the whole proceedings, and a continuity and concentration of vindictive feeling, which forms a deep stain upon the character of the King.

Nor was this lessened by a shocking scene which followed the executions. One only branch of the house of Albany, his son James Stewart, surnamed Big James, had escaped the general arrest. Driven to despair by the ruin of his family, he collected a powerful band of his retainers, and, attacking the burgh of Dumbarton, not only rased it to the ground, but murdered the King's uncle, Sir John Stewart of Dundonald. So hotly, however, was he pursued by the regal vengeance, that he with difficulty escaped to Ireland. Five of his followers, however, were seized; and, on being dragged before the King at Stirling, he commanded them to be torn in pieces by wild horses, and afterwards suspended in horrid frag-

ments upon poles; a spectacle intended to operate as a terrible example of the punishment to be henceforth inflicted upon such vassals as forget, in their obedience to the commands of their feudal superior, their higher allegiance to the laws.

If such were the effects produced by this extremity of rigour on the popular mind, the depth and intensity of feeling in the near relatives of the sufferers may be easily imagined. For a season, indeed, it was necessary that they should be suppressed; but the more profoundly were they cherished in many a dark and determined bosom: and terrible at last was the sacrifice by which the shades of Albany and his sons were appeased.

In the mean time, the monarch hastened to seize upon those estates which, as the property of traitors, were forfeited to the crown. The lands belonging to the family of Albany had accumulated under the late usurpation to an extent which was formidable to the throne; and, as there is every reason to conclude, that in the spoliations of the crown lands, which had reduced the royal revenue to such contracted limits, no inconsiderable part had found its way into the hands of Duke Murdoch and his sons, it is probable the monarch, in their subsequent forfeiture, only recovered what had originally belonged to him. The unfortunate widow of the Duke of Albany was permitted to retain her estates and titles, and continued to reside till her death upon her earldom of Lennox. Her calamities were unparalleled in an age which presents us with numerous instances

of bitter misfortune. In one day the axe of the executioner deprived her of her husband, her father, and her two gallant sons; whilst the third was driven into hopeless banishment, where he soon died. She retired to her manor of Inchmurin, situated on a beautiful island in Loch Lomond; and there, amid the consolations of religion, and the exercises of charity, spent the remainder of a life which was protracted to a lengthened period. She survived to hear the dreadful fate of him whose inflexible sentence had cut off from her all living kindred: and the last act in which we find her name is a grant of lands to the Dominicans at Glasgow, for the welfare of her soul, and of the souls of her dearest husband, her father, and her beloved sons.[1]

Having thus rid himself of his enemies, James appears to have immediately restored to liberty those of the nobility who had been arrested with Duke Murdoch; and, after the dreadful example which they had witnessed of the power of the monarch, it may be concluded that he ran little risk in adopting this measure of leniency. The Parliament then proceeded to the consideration of various subjects connected with the prosperity of the kingdom: acts were passed for the encouragement of agriculture and tillage, and for the preservation of the forest timber and green wood; a singular proof that, even at this early period, in 1424, the immense forests which had once covered the face of the country had disappeared. The subjects of commerce and manufactures were brought under consideration, and

[1] Douglas's Peerage, vol. ii. 85.

various restrictions on exportation enacted; which evince a jealousy lest the state should be impoverished by over trading. The defence of the kingdom was provided for by the institution of armed musters, or "weapon schawings," which were ordained to be held four times every year, when prizes for excellence in archery and other military exercises were to be distributed. As to the administration of justice,—a subject which, under the late tumultuous and disorganized state of the kingdom, had been much neglected,—it is pleasing to meet with an enactment which evinces a humane and generous consideration for the rights of that great body of the poorer classes of the people who were unable to pay the expenses of litigation. The act declares, that, if there be any "poor creature," who, for want of knowledge, and the impossibility of advancing the proper fees, cannot pursue his cause, or procure redress, then the King, for the love of God, shall ordain the judge, before whose tribunal the cause ought to have been brought, to provide a faithful and able advocate, to whom the management of the plea shall be intrusted. If the cause is decided in favour of the aggrieved person, the opponent is not only to indemnify the injured party, but to pay the advocate's costs: and if, upon any occasion, the King should find the judge refusing to grant to such unfortunate persons an impartial hearing and fair decision, he engages his royal word to punish that officer in a fashion which shall be an example to all others in future.[1]

This memorable Parliament concluded with

[1] Acts of Parliament of Scotland, vol. ii. p. 8.

an act against the doctrines of the Reformation which, under the name of heresy and Lollardism, had been gaining secret ground in Scotland since the martyrdom of John Resby, at Perth, eighteen years before this time. Much impression had been made by the discourses of this primitive apostle of the truth; much by the study of those little treatises and translations from the Scriptures which the followers of Wickliff were accustomed to disseminate amongst their proselytes; much also by the calmness and courage with which Resby was enabled to bear an excruciating death, testifying by his blood to the purity of the doctrines which he preached. James, under Henry IV. and Henry V., both of whom were glad to purchase the support of the church at the price of religious persecution, had been early made a convert to intolerance; and, animated by the same desire of procuring to his infant government the favour of the clergy, and blinded by their misrepresentations and complaints, he did not scruple to add the weight of his royal authority to the measures which the church deemed it necessary to adopt for the destruction of the new opinions: an act was passed, by which every bishop within his diocese was enjoined to make search and inquisition for all Lollards or heretics, where such were suspected of having taken refuge; and, when necessary, the secular arm was directed to be called in to support the ecclesiastical authority. Thus, by the perversity of those who ought to have blessed its faintest beams, was that healing light of truth and reformation for a time suppressed, which, even

under the darkest ages of the church, had never ceased to be cherished and preserved, although shut up in the writings of pious scholars or divines; which, from the language in which they were written, and the ignorance of the age, never reached the great body of the people.

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